

# THE ETHICS CENTRE

Annual Report 2019–20



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# The Year That Changed the World



This financial year began quite differently for The Ethics Centre. We were within reach of the Centre's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary – offering a sense of celebration and quiet achievement. Having reached that milestone in November 2019, we reflected on three decades spent encouraging the Australian community to bring ethics to the centre of everyday life, ranging from the decisions of individuals through to the conduct of our major institutions. We recalled the founding of powerful change-making initiatives, including: **Primary Ethics**, the **Vincent Fairfax Fellowship**, **Ethi-call**, and the **Festival of Dangerous Ideas**.

Indeed, it was all shaping up to be a 'big year'. In the first six months, we released a decision making guide for boards and tool-kit enabling small-to-medium businesses to develop their own ethics frameworks. We launched the program for the 10<sup>th</sup> **Festival of Dangerous Ideas** – due to be held in April 2020. And we commenced a number of new initiatives designed to institute critical thinking and ethical deliberation in secondary and professional education.

Then, the world changed. First, bushfires ravaged the eastern seaboard of Australia, catapulting environmental ethics and political accountability into the public fore. The fires were followed by the global pandemic that has, sadly, killed so many, closed borders, challenged decision making, highlighted inequity and brought new, unseen ethical challenges to the doorsteps of every person in the world. COVID-19 not only closed the **Festival of Dangerous Ideas** it required our entire organisation to pivot to a purely digital delivery and workplace culture.

It has been the year that changed the world. It has also been the year that the world needed ethics like never before. The Ethics Centre was founded 30 years ago for times like these. This year has highlighted why The Ethics Centre is so critical to the foundation and future of Australian society.

This review shares many of the initiatives we delivered from July 2019 through to June 2020.

# In Challenging Times Ethics Can Help

Is fear the true pandemic?



ARTICLE - LIFESTYLE + HEALTH  
Ethics in a time of coronavirus

Can we find meaning in isolation?



ARTICLE - RELATIONSHIPS  
How to deal with people who aren't doing their bit to flatten the curve



ARTICLE - RELATIONSHIPS  
Mutuality of care in a pandemic

How far and wide should our care for others extend?



ARTICLE - BEING HUMAN  
There is something very revealing about #ToiletPaperGate

Are we brutish by nature?

Must we ration human lives?



ARTICLE - BEING HUMAN  
Rationing life: COVID-19 triage and end of life care

Where do you draw the line?



ARTICLE - POLITICS  
The sticky ethics of protests in a pandemic



ARTICLE - BUSINESS + FINANCE  
Moving work online

Will remote working become the norm?



ARTICLE - LIFESTYLE + HEALTH  
Coronavirus reveals our sinophobic underbelly

Is racism a byproduct of fear?

## Can we measure wellbeing economically?



ARTICLE – POLITICS  
To deal with this crisis, we need to talk about ethics, not economics

## What does it take to lead in a crisis?



ARTICLE – BUSINESS + FINANCE  
Why ethical leadership needs to be practiced before a crisis



ARTICLE – BEING HUMAN  
It's easy to ignore the people we can't see

## Do you consider people you don't see?



ARTICLE – LIFESTYLE + HEALTH  
Disease in a Time of Uncertainty

## Are we prepared for the next epidemic?

## Are parents ready to be teachers?



ARTICLE – RELATIONSHIPS  
This isn't home schooling, it's crisis schooling

## Does value trump possible harm?



ARTICLE – RELATIONSHIPS  
Is it ok to visit someone in need during COVID-19?

## Is authoritarianism the solution?



ARTICLE – LAW + HUMAN RIGHTS  
There's more than lives at stake in managing this pandemic



ARTICLE – POLITICS  
Whose home, and who's home?

## How do you define fairness?

# 2019-20 Reflection

**We had all hoped that our thirtieth anniversary year would be a celebration of past achievements and more importantly, a springboard for future opportunity. So, we made our plans – and were delighted when they started to deliver the results we wished for.**

The Festival of Dangerous Ideas was aiming to celebrate its tenth edition – with one of our best programs ever attracting solid sponsorship and generating good ticket sales. Our Consulting & Leadership practice was developing and delivering new forms of ethical impact within organisations. We were building our roster of philosophers – with Eleanor Gordon-Smith bringing fresh perspectives and a new voice to our contribution to public discussion... I could go on. However, there is little point in doing so because we all know what happened next.

It would be easy enough to dwell on the disappointment and loss caused by COVID-19. In particular, there was the price paid by loyal and competent colleagues whose jobs were made redundant – not through any fault on their part, but as a matter of financial necessity.

Yet, the extraordinary events covered in this review have also been a source of inspiration and renewal. Like every other organisation, The Ethics Centre has had to rethink its purpose, its vision for the world it hopes to influence and the strategy by which its potential impact can be realised.

The crucible of the pandemic has helped us to refine our understanding of our work. We have seen the value of Ethi-call as a service to help ease the wearing effects of 'moral fatigue' and prevent the far more serious risk of 'moral injury'. This area of our work would benefit from the results of serious research – but the anecdotal evidence is compelling – and even if only one person has been saved from self-recrimination and despair, then that is enough.

We were buoyed by the affirmation we received from so many of our members, donors, sponsors, ticket holders, supporters – those who helped us not only to fill the gaping financial hole we looked into as the year progressed but who also signaled that our work matters – especially at such times.

This has been a time to look inwards – to ask if our own culture measures up to our expectations. The truth is that we frequently disappoint. However, by June 30th we could sense a change for the better. I would like to thank all of my colleagues – those who remain and those who have departed – for their contribution during this period of renewal.

In the course of the past year, we also refreshed our strategy. In doing so, we reviewed our own ethics framework. The most significant change was in our vision – which now offers a much clearer description of the world we wish to help make.



This is a world: “In which privilege has been tempered by fairness; in which power has been checked by conscience; in which good and right prevail – for the benefit of all.”

We believe that a healthy and prosperous society can only be sustained through an investment in the quality and character of its ‘ethical infrastructure’ – the formal and informal mechanisms through which we regulate the exercise of power for the public good. This is the work of The Ethics Centre – to keep tending to the ethical foundations on which all else must stand.

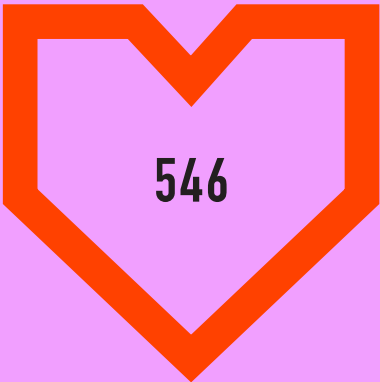
This review tells something of the story of that work over the past financial year. Not every detail of note has been revealed. There are aspects of the Centre’s work that never see the light of day due to obligations of confidentiality. There are moments of profound impact that lie so deep as never to be recorded. Yet, I sincerely believe that, seen or unseen, The Ethics Centre is an agent for change and a better world.

It is a remarkable privilege to have a job that one loves and to lead an organisation that inspires belief. It is an imperfect place. It is constantly at risk of failure. It hangs on by its fingertips. It is remarkable.

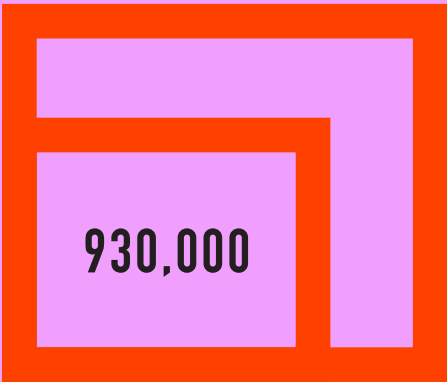
So, thanks to the Centre’s Board, to my colleagues, to our members and supporters for tending the flame. A single spark is all one needs to ignite a forest of light.

**Simon Longstaff AO**  
Executive Director

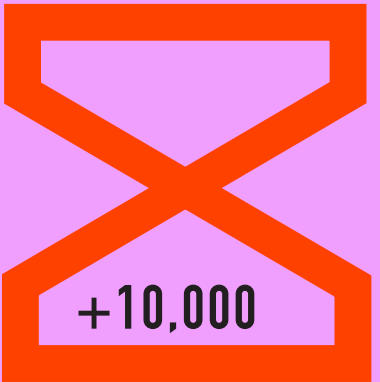
# 2019-20 Highlights



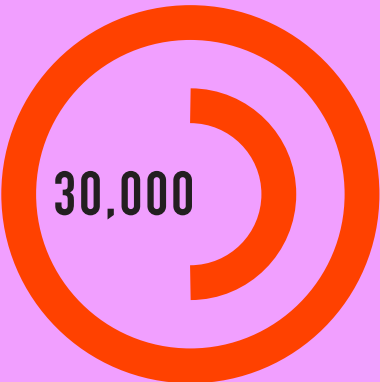
Members of The Ethics Centre, including welcoming 170 new members into our community.



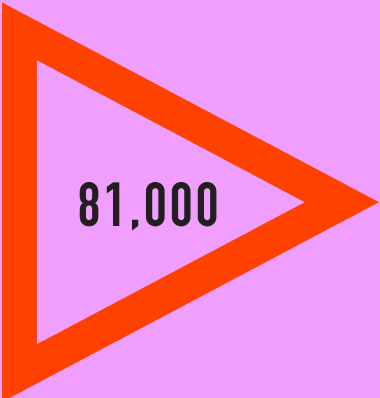
Website views across 500,000 visitors, representing a 73% increase in traffic.



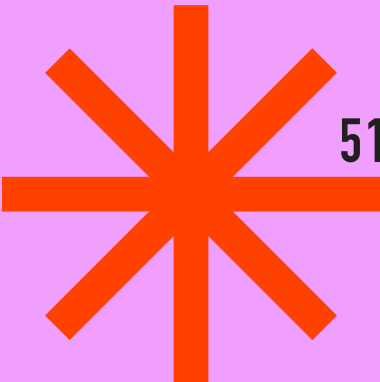
Minutes of ethical counselling, delivered by our 12 volunteer counsellors on Ethi-call.



Downloads of Festival of Dangerous Ideas podcast episodes.

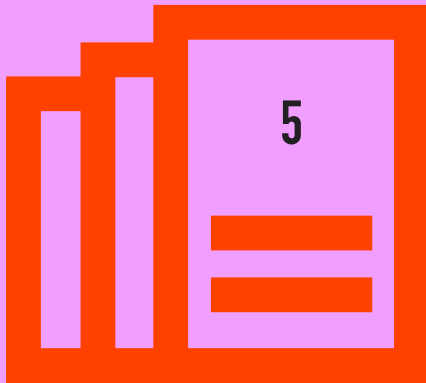


Views of The Ethics Centre and Festival of Dangerous Ideas videos.

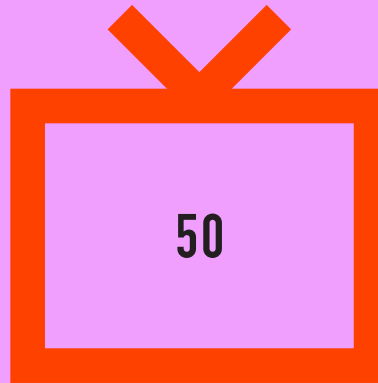


International and Australian speakers challenged ideas and perspectives across 17 event sessions.

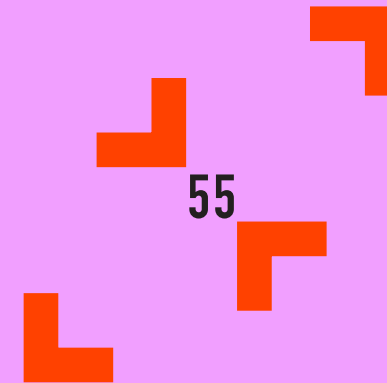




New thought leadership papers released on the topics of business, technology, trust, culture and leadership.



Interviews and articles published exploring the ethics of critical issues across radio, print, digital and TV.



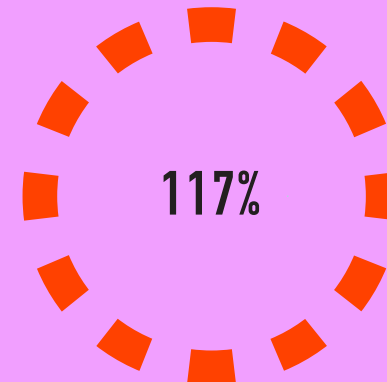
Speaking engagements giving light the role of ethics in organisations and industries.



Fans in our social media community across Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.



New professionals took the Banking and Finance Oath. A 31% increase that brings the number of current signatories to 3835.



Increase in organisational impact engagements through workshops, culture reviews and services.

# Our Vision

2020 was the year the world changed. It was also the year we adapted our vision for the future:

**A WORLD IN WHICH PRIVILEGE HAS BEEN TEMPERED  
BY FAIRNESS; IN WHICH POWER HAS BEEN CHECKED  
BY CONSCIENCE; IN WHICH GOOD AND RIGHT PREVAIL —  
FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL.**

# Our Strategic Pillars for Change

We bring ethics to the centre of everyday life in three strategic ways:



The Ethics Centre's role is unique in Australian life. We advocate for higher ethical standards in all areas of society; including business, politics, sport, energy, the military, NGOs and more. We exist to bring ethics to the centre of everyday life. We work to hold open the civic space to debate and discuss the ideas that define our time.

When people or organisations need an independent consultant on ethical dilemmas, we provide that confidential service. We provide ethics counselling to anyone who needs it, free of charge. And, we promote ethics to all – from children in primary schools, to the houses of parliament and Australia's business elite – as a way to realise our vision for a better world.

**Let's explore how.**

# DEMONSTRATING & SUPPORTING GOOD DECISION MAKING

Choices matter. Our decisions shape the world, one at a time. Philosophers have examined the underlying structure of decision making. It is reflected in the core question of ethics, first posed by Socrates as 'what ought one to do?'



The challenge is that decision making is individual in nature – made from a singular viewpoint, out of habit or societal norms. Often, neither habit nor societal norms reflect what each of us ought to do. However well-intentioned we all are toward our choices, they are frequently driven by subconscious bias and conformity. Yet, decisions are collective in their impact. Each choice we make leaves an imprint on our own lives, those around us and the world at large.

That's why supporting good decision making is a key strategic pillar for The Ethics Centre. Because we believe that supporting Australians to make more considered, ethical decisions will lift the standard of individual, corporate and collective behaviour – for the benefit of all. The following pages highlight some of the ways in which we have delivered on this intention across the year.



## ETHI-CALL

### Guidance Through Ethical Issues

Now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year, **Ethi-call** is The Ethics Centre's free independent helpline, providing expert and impartial guidance to help people make their way through life's toughest challenges. Calls are conducted by our team of dedicated volunteer counsellors, helping people find greater clarity and confidence in moving forward on a range of issues from the personal to the professional. This year, thanks to donor funding, we were able to update the **Ethi-call** platform. This significant technology upgrade will increase accessibility and call capacity, as well as enhancing the user experience from booking through to post-call care. It was rolled out in September 2020.



## ETHICS WORKSHOPS

### Tools for Complex Decision Making

**Ethics & Decision Making** is a customised learning experience for organisations and teams, designed to refine their ethical decision making capabilities. Popular across a diverse range of industries and both the private and government sectors, this year we delivered this workshop to more than 50 groups. This substantial increase in demand illustrates the growing appetite for ethics in Australian organisations. Clients responded positively when we adapted to COVID-19 by moving to a virtual delivery format. The new virtual format ensured we could continue to deliver this crucial support in an increasingly complex environment. The workshops play an important role in supporting our strategic goals by initiating close and influential contact with the participants.



## PANDEMIC GUIDANCE

### Navigating Unprecedented Change

The onset of a global pandemic with restrictions and quarantines thrust us all into a new reality, where simple everyday decisions could have a profound and even life-or-death impact on those around us. We mobilised quickly, offering near real time analysis and support, publishing over 40 articles reflecting the pressing issues and questions posed by people within our community. Our philosophers unpicked the ethical dimensions of the many challenges faced by Australians. These ranged from sending kids to school, visiting the vulnerable, attending protests, and making sense of behavioural change such as panic buying and moral fatigue, through to holding our public representatives to a higher standard of accountability.

## ALLIANCE GATHERINGS



### A Collaborative Space for Leaders

The **Ethics Alliance** is a corporate community bringing together leaders from diverse sectors and industries to share and exchange ideas and collaborate on the ethical issues facing business. The Alliance meets regularly, and gatherings are conducted in a confidential environment. Originally devised for CEOs, COVID-19 led to a reconfiguration of the program and we expanded into an online delivery designed for key decision makers in our community. Separate gatherings were held for CEOs, CFOs, chairs, heads of people and culture and nominated ambassadors. In a time of uncertainty and constant change in both business and society more broadly, this platform has provided a safe community space for considered discussions and the application of an ethical lens to the unprecedented issues we all now face.

## ETHICS IN THE BOARDROOM



### Shining a Light on Ethical Boards

This year, The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and The Ethics Centre teamed up to develop a decision making guide for directors. **Ethics in the Boardroom** provides directors with a simple decision making framework that can be used to navigate the ethical dimensions of any decision. Through the insights of directors, academics and subject matter experts, the guide provides four lenses through which to frame board conversations. They will help directors pinpoint and resolve disagreement. Distributed through The Ethics Centre and AICD's network, the guide has reached hundreds of board directors Australia-wide including those of schools, sporting clubs, charities and family businesses as well as large corporations.

## BETTER SELF PROGRAM



### Empowering the Next Generation

Engaging with younger audiences is an ongoing priority for The Ethics Centre, to provide the tools for the next generation to make sound ethical decisions in an increasingly complex world. This year we partnered with Higher Resolves to develop the **Better Self Program** for school students in years 7-12. The program promotes transformational change in student learning experiences. It is based on The Ethics Centre's ethical decision making styles and the concept of a citizen's panel to formulate self-awareness and self-empowerment in decision making. It was piloted in Miami, USA, and Canada, with programs successfully delivered in a number of Australian high schools including St George Girls High School, Holsworthy High School, Pine Rivers State High School, Caboolture State High School, Hornsby Girls High School, as well as at the University of Technology Sydney.

# BUILDING & MAINTAINING A CIVIL SOCIETY

A civil society is an open society. One in which ideas, ideals and beliefs can be addressed openly, in conditions of peace and mutual respect. It does not imply a society of uniformity of ideas or perspectives, but rather one where discussion and interrogation of belief is not only possible, but plausibly undertaken for the pursuit of greater good.





Ethics invites engagement with alternative points of view and spaces where people can challenge their own assumptions about what ought to be done. Through connection and empathy change becomes possible. This is only achieved by listening, questioning, discovering and indeed interrogating the things we consider to be true.

At The Ethics Centre we champion the examined life. It is a core role of the Centre to create safe spaces where ethical deliberation can occur. We aim to facilitate arenas in which people can explore ethical questions; in part, by encountering the views of others who might hold radically opposed positions.



**“The Ethics Centre has incredible outreach into all sectors of the community. It’s quite remarkable.”**

Alan & Carol Schwartz,  
The Ethics Centre Supporters



## FODI DIGITAL

### Festival of Dangerous Ideas – Pandemic Edition

When COVID restrictions came into place, we had to make the heart-wrenching decision to cancel the 2020 **Festival Of Dangerous Ideas** (FODI). Amidst the challenge we saw the opportunity to deliver a completely digital festival experience and take the ideas festival global. Over the weekend of 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> May, the Festival hosted nine digital conversations that took inspiration from the 2020 theme ‘Dangerous Realities’. Streamed free of charge via the Festival website, it featured local and international speakers including Kevin Rudd, Masha Gessen and David Sinclair. Over 10,000 viewers tuned in to watch live, with a further 23,000 on-demand views after the event. FODI Digital captured a completely new audience and kept us connected to our community in an authentic and meaningful way.



## MEDIA ADVOCACY

### Bringing Ethics to the Centre of Public Discourse

Whenever a news story requires an ethical perspective, The Ethics Centre is on call. We work closely with media outlets to ensure that ethical analysis and guidance is available for media coverage dealing with the big and human issues we all face. In the past 12 months Dr Matt Beard and Dr Simon Longstaff have been invited to appear on major media programs, including *Q&A*, *The Project*, *Sky News*, and ABC radio, reaching a national audience of millions. We have given more than 50 interviews to national news outlets such as *The Guardian*, *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Crikey* and ABC News.



## A NEW YOUNG PHILOSOPHER

### Embracing Diversity of Ideas & Innovation

Innovation requires a diversity of ideas and thinkers, which is why this year we championed the recruitment of a new philosopher into the Centre's team, Eleanor Gordon-Smith. She joins Dr Matt Beard who has delivered transformative work for the Centre, including **Ethical by Design** and his significant contribution to the ABC's **Short & Curly** podcast. Eleanor is a regular broadcaster and an in-demand cutting-edge thinker. She published her first novel last year. She specialises in ethics, language, and epistemology, and we are thrilled to have her on board working on some new projects for next year.



## IQ<sup>2</sup>

### Different Sides to an Argument

The popular **IQ<sup>2</sup>** series continued to bring carefully chosen teams face-to-face to vigorously debate their position before a live audience vote. Entering its twelfth year of presenting the Australian series, The Ethics Centre hosted two debates in FY20 with 1,900 attendees. The first, 'Democracy is Failing the People', featured speakers Dr Andrew Charlton, Amanda Vanstone, Daisy Jeffrey, and Craig Reucassel for a look at democracy in the current age from multiple perspectives. The second debate, 'Masculinity – is it really so fragile?' did not shy away from discussing the constructs of masculinity, featuring David Leser, Zac Seidler, Catharine Lumby and Raewyn Connell for a truly illuminating debate.



## THE ETHICS OF... REIMAGINED

### Brave Ideas & New Formats

This year we reimaged our popular event series, **The Ethics of...**, taking on fresh new formats and unexplored topics. Over a series of six intimate events, **The Ethics of...** covered the prickly ethical dimensions of the human condition; The Ethics of Nudity, Giving, Courage, Lying, Desire and a special Art and Violence edition in partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. The series continues to attract new audiences to the Centre through its intimate and innovative delivery formats. The highlight this year was our interactive The Ethics of Giving event, where the ticket revenue became a live donation, with one big catch – the audience had to decide who would receive the total funds.

# REVITALISING AUSTRALIA'S ETHICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

After 30 years spent working with Australia's institutions, organisations, and individuals, we came to realise there is a critical component to the ethics of the nation. We call this ethical infrastructure. It refers to the institutional arrangements – like the professions, the media, political parties, churches and the other informal structures – that regulate the use of power in society.



While Australians depend on this ethical infrastructure for our health, safety and prosperity, the past decade has seen a precipitous fall in the public's trust in these institutions, as well as an erosion of their core purpose – that of serving the greater good.

This weakening of purpose has been accompanied by the unprecedented rise of technology and scientific discovery that offer humans, or a select group of humans, more power than ever before.

Ethics, the branch of philosophy that deals with human choice, provides a means for repairing broken institutions (society's ethical infrastructure). Guided by our strategic objectives, The Ethics Centre is striving to repair and galvanise the ethical infrastructure of today to create a better tomorrow. Read on to discover some the ways we are working at designing a good future for both people and the planet we inhabit.



**“All enterprises today must look beyond what’s legally permissible and ask the question, ‘What is morally and ethically correct?’”**

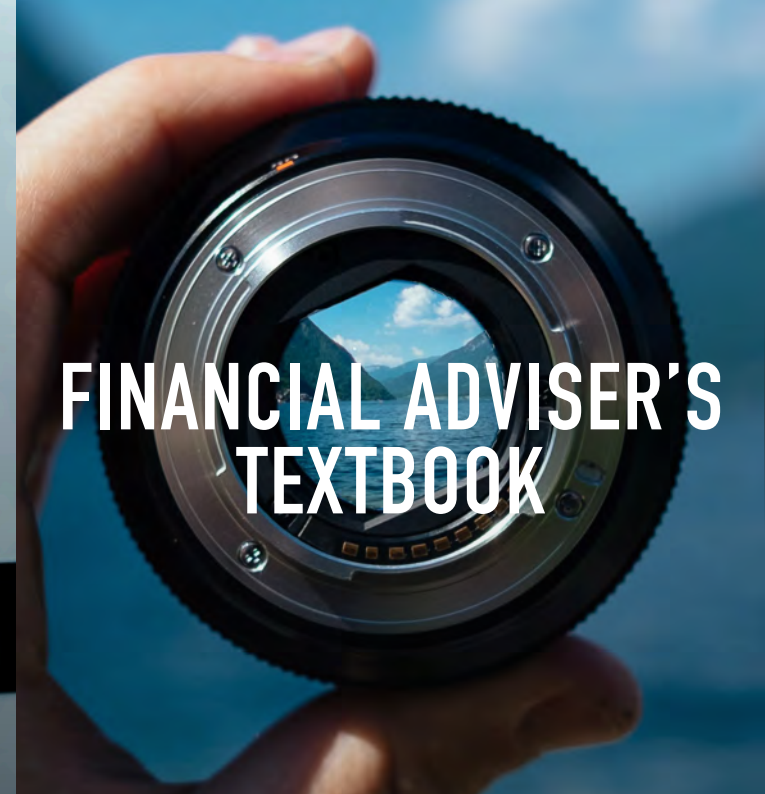
David Gonski, UNSW Chancellor,  
President of the Art Gallery of NSW Trust



## **BANKING & FINANCE OATH**

### **Young Ambassadors for Change in Financial Services**

This year the **Banking and Finance Oath Young Ambassador Program** received a record number of applications from young finance professionals looking to create a strong ethical foundation as they begin their careers. Current and past cohorts collaborated to produce a podcast series, **Ethics in Financial Services**, with six episodes now available and more to come. Our Young Ambassadors are also shining a light on ethical practice, producing a short film with industry regulators, exploring ways to galvanise young professionals passionate about shepherding positive change.



## **FINANCIAL ADVISER'S TEXTBOOK**

### **Ethics Guidance for Financial Service Professionals**

**Everyday Ethics for Financial Advisers** is a new textbook released by The Ethics Centre in March 2020. It was produced to help Australian financial advisers get ahead of the curve in terms of their professional ethics. It is a practical guide that offers ethical decision making frameworks and is supported by real-life case studies based on the five values and 12 standards of the FASEA Code of Ethics. The text is already embedded into the financial planning curricula at UNSW, Griffith University, TAFE NSW, Deakin University and Queensland University of Technology. It is available at major online retailers and university bookshops and comes with a Lecturer’s Guide and multimedia resources.



## FPA PARTNERSHIP

### Making Ethics Practical for Financial Planners

This year we entered a collaborative partnership with the Financial Planning Association (FPA), the peak industry body for the financial services industry. Designed to promote ethical practice and reflection for financial planners, the partnership includes a seat on its professional designation body, online ethics seminars, content collaborations across articles and podcasts, a keynote presentation at the FPA annual conference and ongoing promotion of **Ethi-call**, our free helpline, to FPA's membership base.



## PRACTICAL GUIDE

### An Ethics Foundation for Small to Medium Enterprises

Not every organisation has the time or the funds needed to invest in specialist ethics advice. That's why we developed **Purpose, Values and Principles**, a practical guide for Australia's 2.5 million small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs). This 'DIY Guide' ethics framework goes beyond broad theory to offer SMEs practical, step-by-step guidance to define and apply their own purpose, values and principles and build stronger, better businesses. Funded by a contribution from The Community Benefits Payments administered by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, the free guide was released in March 2020.



## CATALYST INNOVATION LAB

### Teaching Ethical Citizenship in a Digital Age

In 2019 we partnered with the NSW Department of Education, working with their Catalyst Innovation Lab. The Lab invites teachers to pitch creative new teaching ideas in the Department's priority areas. The theme was 'ethical citizenship in a time of AI'. Our Innovation team served on the judging panel for initial pitches and helped screen ideas from the early rounds. We then worked as mentors and coaches for the successful teams, providing ethical guidance and support as the projects matured. The winning project, a 'choose your own adventure'-style lesson, is now being developed to be rolled out in public schools around NSW.

**WORKING TOGETHER  
TO BRING ETHICS  
TO THE CENTRE OF  
AUSTRALIAN LIFE**





# Consulting & Leadership



Over the past 12 months our newly renamed Consulting and Leadership Services team worked with over 50 Australian organisations to help leaders and their people make better decisions and navigate an increasingly complex and turbulent operating environment. In the context of this volatile and uncertain environment we assessed culture, shared insights into shadow values and made recommendations for how to remediate and future-proof organisations. We have supported leaders to embed ethics, manage risk, and build systemic thinking and ethical cultures. During the first half of 2020, we delivered 52 client engagements and 49 workshops, pivoting quickly to a virtual delivery model to continue our work under COVID-19 restrictions.

The Centre collaborated with the Australian Institute of Company Directors to develop **Ethics in the Boardroom: A Decision Making Guide**, released in October 2019. It was designed to support directors in considering ethical issues and inform conversations about the complex issues they encounter. Given the number of ethical failures that have emerged recently, it is an important reference for any board member.



We completed a number of projects funded by Community Benefits Payments contributions from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, including releasing a DIY **Purpose, Values and Principles** guide for small-to-medium enterprises in March 2020. The Centre also delivered a round table discussion with stakeholders in the finance industry to explore the role of customer advocates in helping vulnerable customers and restoring trust in this vital sector. Following on from **Ethical by Design** report, we tested the principles contained therein with several financial services clients to prevent ethical risk associated with technology design.

We produced a textbook, funded by the Ecstra Foundation, entitled **Everyday Ethics for Financial Advisers**. A guide for the ethical professional, the book is designed as a text for the university bridging courses in ethics. The course is now mandatory for Australian financial advisers under FASEA guidelines and is being recommended by several leading universities.



**“A great course which made me think about how I deal with decisions on a day-to-day basis. Some of the content took me well out of my comfort zone and challenged my beliefs about myself and my ethics, but in a good way.”**

Workshop Participant

**“I didn’t know what to expect when I signed up for the session, but I found the pre-work really interesting and the session itself was really engaging, well-facilitated and informative. It can be really hard to run engaging and collaborative training sessions virtually so I think the team did an amazing job.”**

Workshop Participant

**“The unvarnished truth of the full Culture Review from The Ethics Centre was a fantastic read. The discomfort it causes is the thing that should make us proud – that we are tackling what lies beneath. It is an artefact that speaks to deeds over words.”**

Everest Culture Review Client

# The Ethics Alliance

**The Ethics Alliance is an initiative bringing together diverse organisations interested in prioritising ethics in the way they do business.**

**The Ethics Alliance** is an initiative bringing together diverse organisations interested in prioritising ethics in the way they do business. The challenges of COVID have impacted Australian businesses in an unforeseeable way, and the Ethics Alliance provided guidance to our members throughout the unprecedented challenges and decision making that arose. In FY20 the Alliance entered its third year, and it now has 30 members spanning 12 sectors. This year we welcomed two new organisations – CSIRO and the National Gallery of Australia.

The Ethics Centre adapted to the challenges of the global pandemic by offering an altered program of activities. While born of necessity, the changes have improved both the experience and the outcomes of the platform for our members.

Our gatherings were originally designed only for CEOs, but in the past 12 months we have expanded them to include other leadership groups including CFOs, chairs, heads of people and culture and ambassadors. This expansion provided an opportunity for deeper engagement with a broader cross-section of leaders from each participating organisation in a safe environment.

We produced a short film exploring the ethics of sponsorship. It looks at the case of the 2014 Sydney Biennale. Several artists boycotted the event due to their ties to a sponsor which at that time also operated the Australian government's immigration detention facility in Nauru.

The **Ethics of Procurement** paper was distributed widely to business and discussed at industry conferences. We continue to demonstrate **FieldKit**, a capacity-building platform for decision making, to teams within member organisations.

As COVID-19 hit, we initiated roundtable teleconferencing experiences for members. This gave them access to experts such as John Daley, CEO of the Grattan Institute, who presented to our law firms on the impact of COVID elimination and herd immunity strategies. We also provided guidance for our members in the aged care sector on navigating the unique challenges they faced during this period of hardship.

Now more than ever, the complexities of society demand a deeper understanding of what is good and right. **The Ethics Alliance** is a collaborative program dedicated to designing a future where the unique character of individual businesses can develop, their people can thrive, and others can learn through the partnership.



**“My colleagues and I find the Alliance sessions both inspiring and challenging.”**

Violet Roumeliotis – CEO Settlement Services International (SSI)

# Innovation Lab

**2020 has been a difficult and challenging year for the world. In the aftermath of the climate change-induced floods and fires of 2019-20, a pandemic turned up the global dial on uncertainty.**

In navigating these challenging times innovation is key, as it is in ethics. Ethics involves charting a course through difficult choices – from the day-to-day difficulties where the pathway of what is good and what is right is not clear, through to the wicked problems of climate change and the generation-defining choices of balancing the economy and saving lives.

When we reflect on what we, as an organisation, are good at, we always come back to innovation. In the course of our history, we have established an impressive track record for developing and executing really daring innovative ideas and projects. This year has been no exception.

We have taken our ethical literacy diagnostic tool to the next level, developing a branding and positioning strategy to help us take it to market. Now called ViewFinder, we are looking to scale the tool to help individuals and their teams identify their ethical defaults in decision making.

We have also been working with new modes of experience and different ways of engaging new audiences. In October we prototyped a special **The Ethics of...** event. **The Ethics of Giving** was an immersive event throwing attendees in the thick of the ethical tensions around charity, philanthropy and compassion. Host and creator of the event Dr Matt Beard asked the big questions: are our first obligations to family and community? Or do we need to think more globally? What does it mean to be a good neighbour and global citizen? Can those obligations contradict each other?

In this high-stakes thought experiment, the ticket revenue from the event became a live donation. The audience was responsible for choosing the cause they considered to be most worthy of the donation. But they had skin in the game: in place of a fixed ticket price, attendees were invited to donate any amount for their ticket, whether \$1 or \$100 – it was entirely their decision. A live thought experiment, in real time, with real implications.

Innovation also needs new ideas and thinkers, and it can take a long time for ideas to grow into marketable programs or IP with a monetary value. For this reason, we are committed to investing in smart young philosophers who can keep fuelling our innovation and thought leadership agenda. This year, thanks to our donors, we welcomed Eleanor Gordon-Smith as our new Fellow.



# Engagement

**“Wonderful speakers, easy to access, great to listen to and a lot to learn. [It gave me] access to different points of view, which is important, no matter how angry some of them made me feel!”**

Attendee at FODI Digital

**This year the Marketing and Programming areas at The Ethics Centre were merged to create the new portfolio of Engagement. This has enabled a level of content connectivity across the entire organisation.**

Across FY20, the Engagement team delivered two **IQ<sup>2</sup>** and six **The Ethics of...** events, as well as the launch of the 10<sup>th</sup> **Festival of Dangerous Ideas**, which was due to take place in April 2020 at Sydney Town Hall.

**IQ<sup>2</sup>** took two of the most polarising issues of the year – democracy and masculinity – into two civil debates. With close to 1,000 attendees at each debate, the audience was exposed to a deeper understanding of the ideas on both side of the issues, and those that blur the lines in between.

Our popular **The Ethics of...** series examined the human experience in an intimate forum across six events examining six topics: Lying, Courage, Nudity, Desire, a special interactive **The Ethics of Giving** and the **Art and Violence** edition in partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art.

The **Festival of Dangerous Ideas** program was released in January, with a line-up of 27 sessions featuring local and international speakers including Edward Snowden, Jon Ronson, Roxane Gay, Lindy Chamberlain and Megan Davis, alongside public artworks, performances, thought experiments and the special event **Unforgivable** – a collaboration with the indigenous youth choir Marliya, music project Spinifex Gum and five youth leaders.

Just 22 days out from the 2020 Festival of Dangerous Ideas, the NSW Government introduced restrictions on public gatherings which necessitated the cancellation of the live event. Our team worked quickly to communicate with audiences, speakers and key stakeholders, and tickets were reimbursed, flights were cancelled, and plans were paused.

Adapting quickly, we presented **FODI Digital** in May, featuring many of the speakers from the original event in online conversations. One of the first festivals in the world to pivot to a digital delivery, we had over 10,000 viewers watch live, and a further 23,000 viewers tuned in on demand.

The Engagement team produced an extensive volume of digital content across the year to enhance public literacy in ethics and decision making including a custom content hub dedicated to delivering regular ethical guidance and support for Australians navigating dilemmas that have arisen during the pandemic.

Across the financial year our audience acquisition strategy resulted in a 72% year-on-year increase in website traffic, as well as a doubling of the email newsletter database to 21,000 and vast engagement increases on the Centre's social media channels.

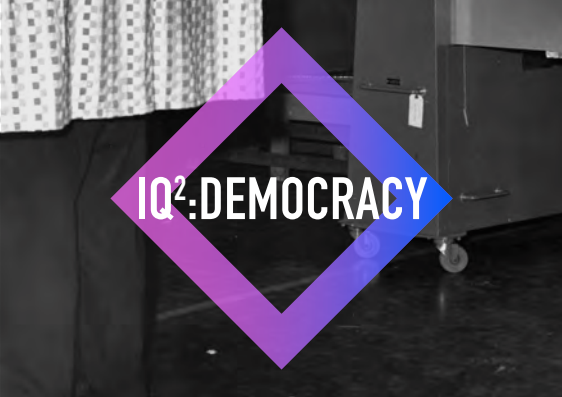




FODI DIGITAL



MISINFORMATION IS INFECTIOUS



IQ<sup>2</sup>:DEMOCRACY



THE TRUTH ABOUT CHINA



ETHICS AT THE END OF THE WORLD



THE ETHICS OF ART & VIOLENCE



THE FUTURE IS HISTORY



THE ETHICS OF COURAGE



THE ETHICS OF LYING



STOLEN FUTURES



THE ETHICS OF NUDITY



SNAP BACK TO REALITY



STATES OF SURVEILLANCE



IQ<sup>2</sup>:MASCULINITY



AGEING IS A DISEASE



THE ETHICS OF GIVING

# Fundraising & Memberships

**The Ethics Centre's fundraising story during this turbulent year has been one of generosity and resilience in the face of adversity.**

In November we held our very first Pitch and Pledge live 'crowdfunding' event in partnership with The Funding Network, and kindly hosted by Clayton Utz. Three of our programs were pitched from the stage: **Ethi-call**, the **Young Philosopher** program, and **Festival of Dangerous Ideas**. Collectively they raised over \$75,000 in only an hour from an audience of more than 100 generous supporters.

The **Festival of Dangerous Ideas** attracted a record level of sponsorship and donations, and was on track to deliver a fabulous event. Unfortunately, COVID-19 derailed our best laid plans. Supporters were invited to donate part of their ticket price or allow us to retain the sponsorship or philanthropic funds. Many did so, resulting in a better financial outcome than expected.

**Ethi-call**, the **Young Philosopher** program, and our early-stage research into secondary school ethics also received significant funding this year from a range of new supporters.

We continued to re-invigorate our engagement program with donors, Catalysts and members, including organising several gatherings at the Centre, as well as the now familiar virtual lunches and conversations with Dr Simon Longstaff and other team members.

On another positive note, our annual end-of-financial-year appeal conducted across May and June proved to be more successful than we could have imagined, particularly considering the year's extraordinary catastrophes. Driven in equal parts by the heartfelt support of the Centre's database of followers and a very generous match-funding incentive from our Board Members, we received over \$300,000 in end-of-year donations. A truly wonderful result.

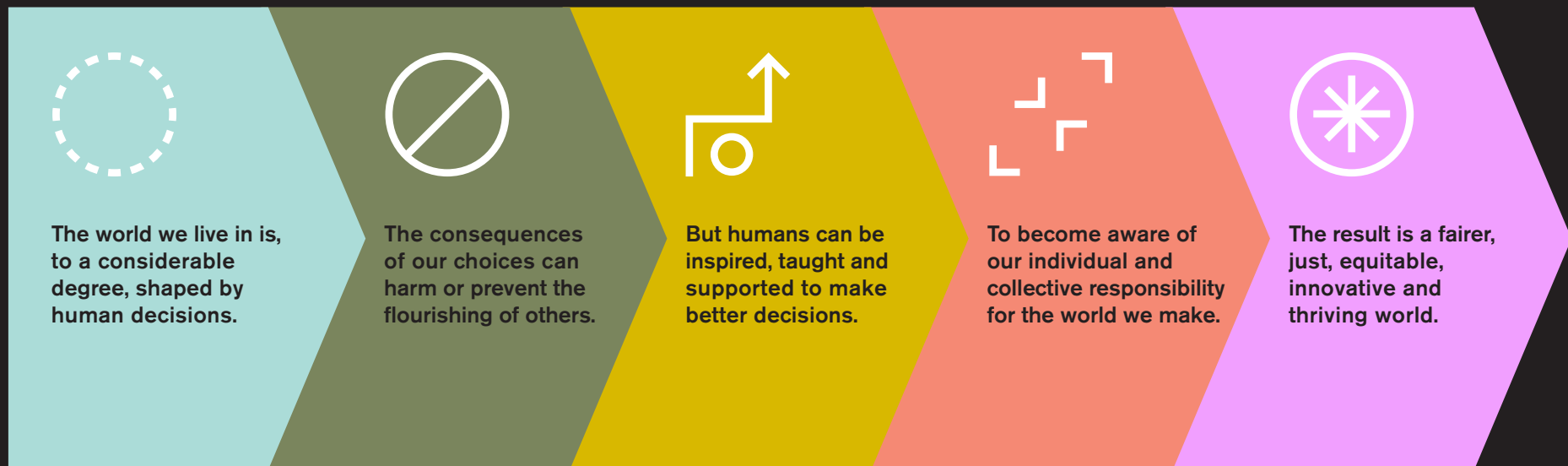
Our deepest gratitude goes out to all our members, donors, Catalysts and supporters for believing in our work and for staying with us in good times and during hardship. We take this opportunity to give particular thanks to the following major donors who have gifted significant donations to The Ethics Centre this financial year.

# Major Donors & Supporters of The Ethics Centre

- + Johanna Featherstone
- + Joblink Plus
- + Carol Schwartz AO & Alan Schwartz AM
- + Bill Ferris AC & Lea Ferris
- + Peter Joseph AM
- + Jost Stollmann
- + Danny Gilbert
- + Barry Lambert
- + UBS Australia Foundation
- + Danny Goldberg
- + Karen Loblay AM
- + University of New South Wales NSW
- + David Gonski AO
- + Grahame Mapp AM & Sue Mapp
- + Vasudhara Foundation
- + Bruce Hogan AM
- + Ian Martin AM & Linda Martin
- + Charles Warman Foundation
- + Emily Albert
- + David Clarke
- + Michael Hudson
- + Peter Hunt AM
- + Michael Pain
- + Geoffrey White OAM & Sally White OAM
- + ANZ Banking Group
- + Christopher Cuffe AO
- + Cav. Simon Mordant AO & Catriona Mordant AM
- + Westpac Banking Corporation
- + Anthony R. Berg AM
- + Ecstra Foundation
- + John B. Fairfax AO
- + IAG Limited
- + Pental Group
- + Woolworths Group
- + Robert Albert AO RFD RD
- + City of Sydney
- + BHP Group Limited

# Our Theory of Change

Our theory of change is ambitious. Central to this ambition is generating system level change. But system level change only begins at an individual level. Here's how:



# Looking Forward

Like you we passionately care about creating a better world. Over the next 12 months we will pursue priority programs across the following areas:



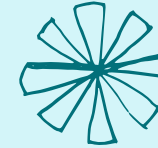
## Good Decision Making

A better world can only be realised when good decision making is combined with active participation. We're leveraging technology as a platform to enhance the ethical literacy of all Australians, improving their ability to integrate ethics into decision making.



## Strengthening Ethics Education

Creating a better future starts with education. Complementing the work of our friends at Primary Ethics, we are working on a range of new and continuing projects to embed ethics into the programs provided by secondary, tertiary and professional education providers.



## Elevating Ethics Discussions

Our society is facing choices of profound significance; choices that demand of us a capacity to debate, discuss and discern matters about which people of goodwill can disagree. This calls for programs and approaches designed to bridge increasingly fractured ideological extremes. We are working on a range of programs and events that foster an open society and ethical deliberation.



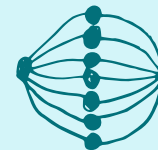
## Rebuilding Ethical Infrastructure

Earlier generations created institutions intended to shape the exercise of public and private power for the common good. The ethical foundations of those institutions have been weakened through neglect – and are in need of repair. We are committed to that task.



## Better Businesses

We continue to support organisations wishing to place ethics at the core of their DNA. This ensures that trust, transparency and ethical decisions are prioritised, elevating social value and helping mitigate ethical failure.



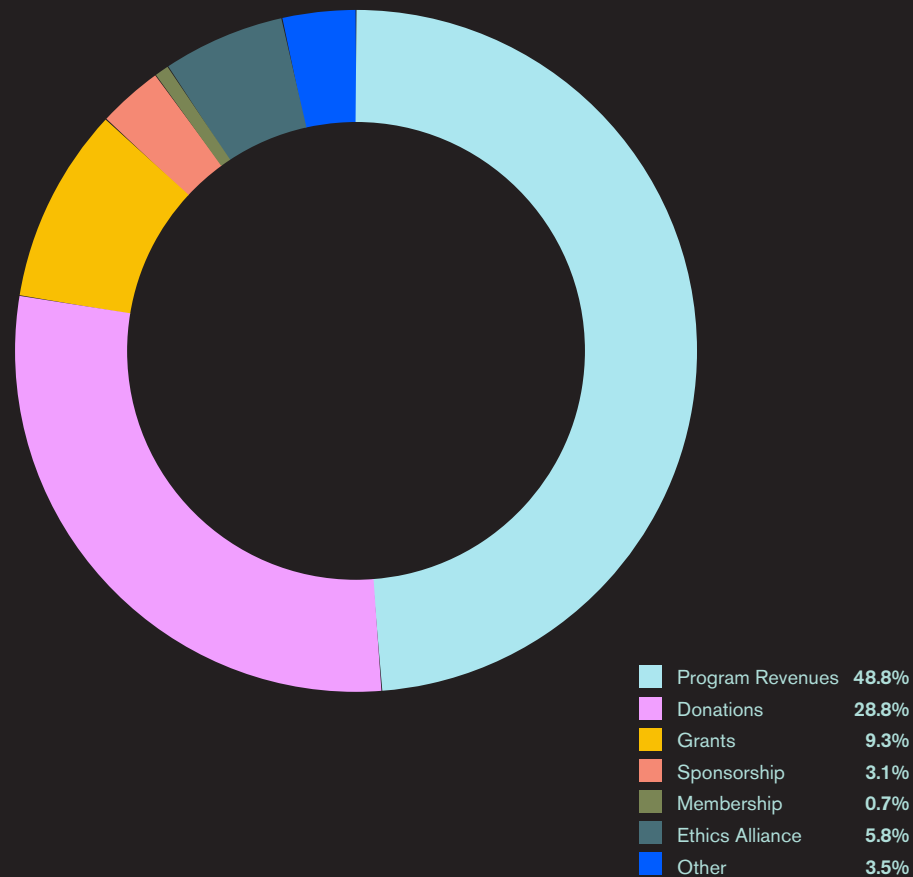
## Ethics in Government

We are championing improved ethics in government and the regulatory frameworks they develop, implement and oversee. Our role is to sharpen the focus on ethics in public policy as a precondition for restoring trust in our leadership and democracy.

# Financial Performance

The Ethics Centre is fortunate enough to receive income from donations, membership fees, ticket sales and speaking fees. We also operate a consulting practice which receives fees from clients in the public and private sectors for provision of ethics advice and education. Many of our activities are supported by a cohort of volunteers who give generously of their time. On the other side of the ledger, we are obliged to meet the cost of our operating expenses, including the delivery of an extensive range of programs and events that support our organisational purpose.

For the year ended 30 June 2020



## Funding Sources:

**Program Revenues: \$2,547,403**

Income received from consulting services, retainers held in relation to consulting, ethics education learning programs, event ticket sales and counselling services.

**Donations: \$1,503,424**

Income received from fundraising appeals.

**Grants: \$483,412**

Income received from non-government grants.

**Sponsorship: \$160,000**

Income received from sponsors in support of the programs being undertaken.

**Membership: \$38,393**

Income received from members of The Ethics Centre as part of the annual membership subscription.

**Ethics Alliance: \$304,334**

Income received from members of The Ethics Centre, as part of the annual membership subscription.

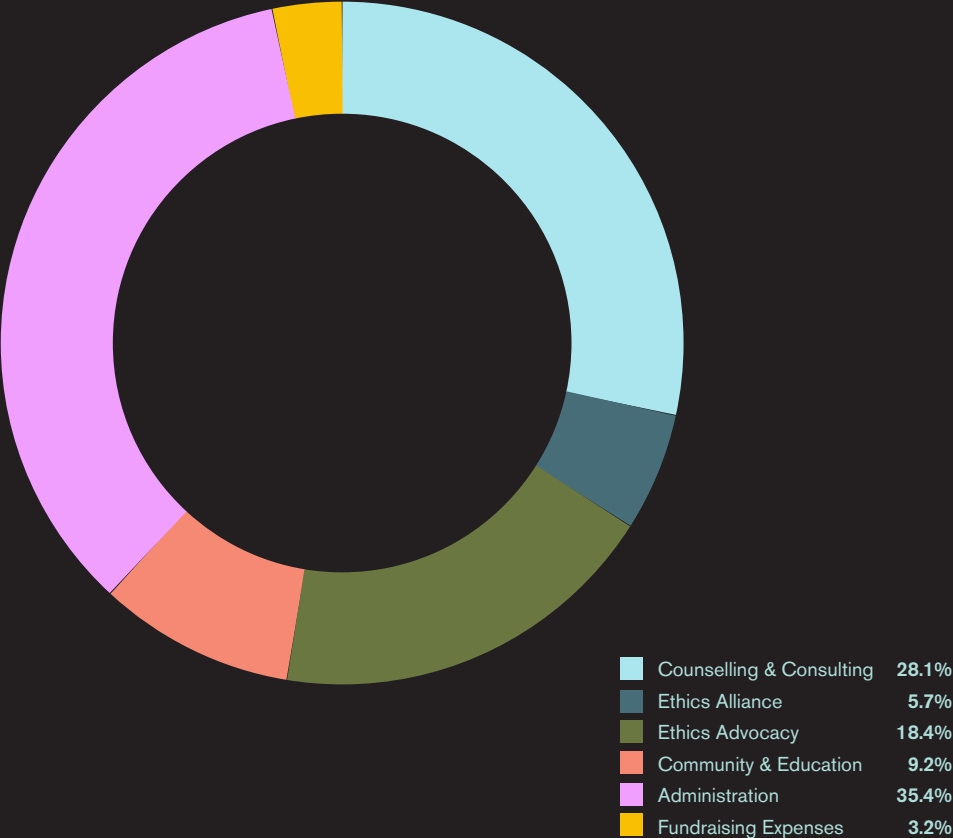
**Other: \$182,186**

JobKeeper subsidy, ATO cash flow boost and interest income.

**Total \$5,219,152**

The funding sources and application represented in the charts above relate to activities undertaken by The Ethics Centre only. It does not include activities of The Ethics Centre's subsidiaries Primary Ethics or The Banking & Finance Oath.

In 2019-20, The Ethics Centre posted a loss of -\$8,948. Being a non-profit has many challenges and while our need and impact may not be as tangible or seem as immediate as other causes, we continue to place a priority on delivering change for a better, fairer and safer world. We are working hard to improve financial sustainability and maintain cash reserves, whilst continuing to bring ethics to the centre of everyday life.



**Program Costs:**

- Counselling & Consulting: \$1,466,641**  
Includes third party consultants and staff costs in relation to delivery of consulting and counselling programs and the ongoing development of the Ethi-call service.
  - Ethics Alliance: \$296,740**  
Includes staff and third-party costs in relation to developing tools and publications and holding events and discussions for the benefit of members.
  - Ethics Advocacy: \$961,895**  
Includes staff and third-party costs in relation to developing and promoting content, articles and curating public debates.
  - Community & Education: \$481,782**  
Includes staff and third-party trainer costs in relation to delivering education programs and staff costs associated with research.
  - Administration: \$1,854,257**  
Operating expenses associated with administration, including staff, finance, IT, HR, professional services, telecommunications and general marketing costs.
  - Fundraising Expenses: \$166,785**  
The costs associated with attracting more support through donations, developing funding partnerships and the administration of fundraising activities.
- Total \$5,228,100**

# Governance



## Our Structure

The Ethics Centre is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee which is established to be, and to continue, as a charity. The Ethics Centre is listed in the Australian Taxation Act as a deductible gift recipient (DGR).

## Board of Directors

The Centre is governed by a voluntary board of up to twelve directors. The Board is responsible for appointing the chair, secretary and treasurer and delegates day-to-day management to the executive director. During the 2019-20 financial year two new directors, Emile Sherman and Cav. Simon Mordant AO, were appointed to our Board. Two directors, David Eisman and Tony Berg AM, resigned from the Board and we thank them for their contribution.

Peter Joseph AM, Chair

Stephen Brady AO CVO

Scott Gartrell

Narelle Hooper

Caroline Lovell

Stuart Marshall, Treasurer

Cav. Simon Mordant AO

Michael Pain

Emile Sherman

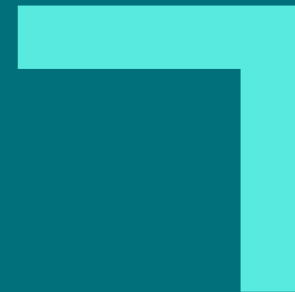
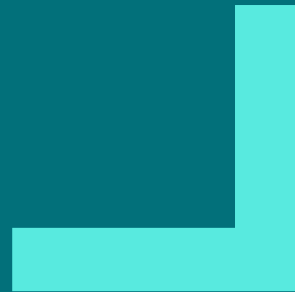
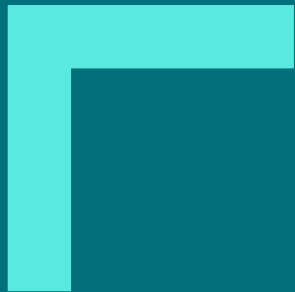
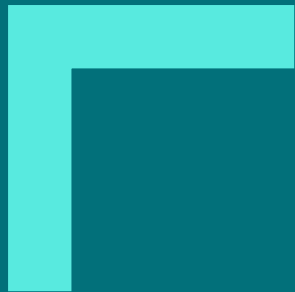
Michelle Tredenick

Robert Wannan

Megan Brewer, Board Observer

Mary Anne Terry, Secretary





### **Role of the Board**

The Board is the trustee of the founding vision of The Ethics Centre and is responsible for its good governance. It oversees the management of the organisation and meets six times a year to:

- + approve the strategic direction and policies
- + approve and monitor budgets
- + define appropriate financial and risk management strategies
- + ensure compliance with relevant standards, regulations and reporting requirements
- + provide accountability to members and stakeholders
- + appoint, support and monitor the performance of the executive director.

### **Management & Staff**

The Centre's executive management is led by Executive Director Dr Simon Longstaff AO.

**More information about our staff is available on our website.**

# Our Supporters

Heartfelt thanks go to all our members, donors, partners, pro bono service providers and volunteers for their tremendous support. With their support we're building a better world where everyone makes more ethical decisions. Just as you rely on The Ethics Centre to provide maps and compasses to lead the way to living ethically, our work depends on the people who care enough to invest time and money in a future with ethics at the centre of everyday life. With ongoing loyalty and generosity, this future is possible.

**Please consider supporting our work.**

As an independent not-for-profit, we don't receive any money from the government to help pay our bills or support the work we do. We rely on donations from donors and sponsors – people like you.

If you want to see more reflective, balanced discussions and moral decision making in our banks, health services, emergency services, schools, universities, sporting clubs, workplaces and media, then now is your chance to invest in something you believe in.

This is your opportunity to contribute to positive change.

The Ethics Centre welcomes donations of any kind and there are many ways to donate. Every gift, large or small, makes a difference. All donations to The Ethics Centre are tax deductible.

For more information, please contact Rosemary Smithson.

T: 02 8267 5725 E: [rosemary.smithson@ethics.org.au](mailto:rosemary.smithson@ethics.org.au)

**Together we can bring ethics to the centre of everyday life.**

# THANKS TO YOU IT IS POSSIBLE

The Ethics Centre team would like to pass on a heartfelt thanks to each of our supporters. It's because of you we can make our work a reality.



