

Taking the next step

Education is just one way Australian Communities Foundation can support donors and grant making. For many of our donors, it's just the start. We also offer a range of programs to help you take the next step; go beyond the basics, to investigate areas that interest you and develop relationships with organisations and causes that matter to you.

Besides family, there are two things in life important to Peter Van Duyn and Veronica Collins. One is traveling and the other is the word *Espero*, meaning hope.

"The word symbolises our aspirations of improving opportunities for the next generation (in a small way) so they can live in peace and each individual can realise their full potential."

The *Espero* Fund was established in 2013 with the aim of supporting a number of charitable causes in Australia and overseas. It has a particular focus on community development and advocacy, improving educational opportunities and aid projects.



Above: Peter Van Duyn and Veronica Collins, *Espero* Fund

Returning from an 800 km cycling tour of Switzerland and reflecting on their philanthropic journey, Peter explains how a number of experiences shaped their thinking.

"My parents raised me with a strong sense of social justice. As did Veronica's parents. I also travelled extensively throughout my professional and personal life, volunteering in Papua New Guinea. It really opens your eyes."

"Later on, hosting asylum seekers from Iran and Pakistan helped to crystallise our views of inequality in Australia."

Motivated by these experiences, Peter and Veronica made the decision to establish a sub-fund.

"When we decided to establish the fund, Australian Communities Foundation seemed like a good fit. We wanted to be connected to the local community, to be involved and engaged in the issues we support."

Almost two years later, Peter and Veronica are regulars at Foundation events and donor circles.

"Becoming members of the Foundation's donor circles has really helped to increase our knowledge. We have been exposed to different organisations, networks and approaches. Our knowledge and commitment to social change has grown, and we have been inspired by the passion and commitment of the other donors we have met."



"We are now active members of the philanthropic community and by being open about our philanthropy we hope to show that it is possible for each of us to make a small contribution to the community."