

THE HANK YOUNG

FOR ABORIGINAL WELFARE
AND EDUCATION



FOUNDATION

Founders Statement

Mr H Young

The Hank Young Foundation for Aboriginal Welfare and Education

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My motivation for establishing The Hank Young Foundation has been largely influenced by my own heritage and life experiences. I was born on December 31, 1929 in Tinte, a very small village in the province of Zuid-Holland in The Netherlands. My parents were Leendert and Gijsberdina Sanderina JONGEJAN. With my three brothers and two sisters we lived a very sober existence. My father was a farm labourer – a position which prior to the Second World War was about the lowest level in European society.

Very poor economic circumstances prevented me from continuing my basic education past the age of twelve. Upon completing primary school I was employed as a farm labourer and made to work for twelve hours per day for thirteen days out of every fortnight; so being on the bottom of the pile is familiar to me.

Following a period of military service in Indonesia I decided to migrate to Australia in June 1950. The early years in my adopted country were spent on large sheep and wheat properties and as a labourer and Shearer I travelled the outback of New South Wales and Queensland.

During those years in the 1950's I was constantly reminded of the unfortunate social and economic plight of a large percentage of the Aboriginal people of Australia. To some extent I could identify and sympathise with the hopelessness of their situation having witnessed the struggling lifestyles of the indigenous people of Indonesia. The social and economic obstacles facing the Aboriginal people of Australia reminded me also of the personal economic, social and educational hardships one can experience as a member of a family whose parents occupied a low, but dignified, social and economic place in society.

My concerns deepened when I realised that the Aboriginals of Australia had been deprived of their land by the early European settlers and government of this country. It also became more apparent to me in the 1950's that the majority of non-Aboriginal Australians were not overly concerned with the lack of European education, dignity, and basic human rights and economic welfare of the Aboriginal people.

In 1964 I moved to Melbourne to develop and build up a mushroom farm. During the years that followed I was fortunate to experience considerable success and consequently benefited greatly from the many opportunities Australia offered to those who were in the right place at the right time. As an ongoing appreciation of the many privileges and economic benefits I have enjoyed in this country I decided in 1987 to make available the major part of my estate and income for the benefit of the Aboriginal people of Australia.

When I discussed my decision with my brother Colin Young, I was encouraged and challenged to make funds available also for the benefit of Aboriginal education because Colin saw education as one of the greatest change agents in society. It was also suggested that I should do the funding in my lifetime in order to give clear guidelines to my family, especially my daughter Brenda. Since that initial discussion in 1987 Colin and his wife Corry have become an integral part of my vision and we have walked this road together.

Following a rather serious open-heart operation in May 1988 I asked Colin to investigate existing structures within the Aboriginal community through which these funds could be directed. As a result financial and consultancy support was provided to various Aboriginal school projects.

The experiences gained from being involved with these projects convinced me that a Charitable Foundation needed to be set up. Such a Foundation would be more beneficial to a diverse range of welfare and educational needs. With the advice and assistance of my brother and my lawyers, The Hank Young Foundation for Aboriginal Welfare and Education is now a reality.

In setting up The Hank Young Foundation my wish is that available funds are to be used for projects and activities which contribute directly or indirectly to: -

- a. The peaceful and harmonious relationship and co-existence of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of Australia; and
- b. The development of the self-esteem and personal dignity of the Aboriginal people, both as individuals and as a cultural group.

Furthermore, it is my great desire that by its activities the work of the Foundation will help in overcoming social, educational and economic discrimination, as well as personal and cultural alienation, racism and negative societal attitudes. I sincerely trust that the recipients of the funds will contribute to positive relationships between Aboriginals and other cultural groups in Australia.

The main objective of the Foundation is to provide funds for the benefit of Aboriginal Welfare and Education. The Trust Deed outlines this objective more specifically. However, it is my belief that the best way of assisting the Aboriginal people is to undertake and sponsor extensive pilot projects, which are innovative in nature and beneficial to the greatest number of Aboriginal people. These projects should eventually become self-supportive and be capable of duplication using some form of government or non-government funding.

My view is that the most appropriate way of raising the living standards of the Aboriginal people in the rural and urban communities is to promote and support activities which contribute to income generation, self-reliance, economic independence, job creation and are self-helping in nature. In selecting major educational projects an emphasis should be placed on those projects, which will raise the social and economic potential of Aboriginal youth and adults.

There are certain areas, however, for which the funds should not be used. Funds must not be used to promote racial segregation and negative discrimination. Projects that are politically, educationally and socially militant and have undemocratic objectives and modes of operation must be avoided. Neither should funds be allocated to projects that are specifically religious, doctrinal or denominational in nature, nor promote a political doctrine or the interest of a particular political party.

Future fund administrators may consider it wise to concentrate on a few larger projects rather than on many small projects, which may have a significant impact on the Aboriginal community as a whole.

Finally, it should be understood that the content of this statement is not meant to limit the responsibilities and creativity of future fund administrators for they, of all people, have my greatest sympathy and best wishes.

Dated in Melbourne this 8th day of May 1990.

Hank H. Young