

GUARDIAN TRUST CENTRE FOR PHILANTHROPY**TOP TIPS FOR HERALD ON SUNDAY****What is the Guardian Trust Centre for Philanthropy?**

We believe 'it's good to give', so we created this Centre to help people do so knowledgeably and sustainably. The Centre is a platform for private philanthropists to choose the best way to structure and target their giving, by better understanding the options available. It will operate within Guardian Trust, and essentially formalize the work we already do in this sector by giving existing and would-be philanthropists access to our knowledge base, which will make it easy to match charities with the objectives of each donor.

Are New Zealanders good philanthropists compared with other countries?

There is a great deal of giving going on, at both regional and nationwide levels. The philanthropic sector is bigger than many realize – about \$115 million was given by philanthropic voluntary trusts for the benefit of New Zealanders last year. However, there is less understanding of the activity of philanthropy here than there is in the United States, for example, which has a history of prominent private sector philanthropists in the form of industrialists like Henry Ford. Today, the Ford Foundation has assets of US\$9.3 billion and gives US\$550 million each year to support health, education, the environment and other causes.

Of course, that is very large-scale giving, and philanthropists in New Zealand tend to prefer a more under-the-radar approach, but what the Centre for Philanthropy will do is further strengthen this sector nationally by communicating that charitable donations need not be one-offs – if they wish, they can use that money to support a particular cause in perpetuity, with prudent trust management.

Why was the Centre established?

It's timely in light of changes to the Charities Commission and new tax legislation for charities being introduced in 2008. While the Commission has set up a governance and accountability framework for all charitable enterprise, the real consequence has been to put a spotlight on the concept of giving and promoting generosity in general. We intend the Centre for Philanthropy to help private charitable trusts meet the new rules, and generally to advance philanthropy for the benefit of all New Zealanders. After many years in this sector and as trustee for more than 450 charitable trusts, we saw a need for a dedicated Centre drawing from a knowledge base developed in consultation with charities, which will match charities with donors' particular interests – anything from medical research to sports facilities.

Why create a trust with the Centre, rather than simply donating to your preferred cause?

We want people to think of philanthropy as a sustainable form of prudent social investment – the sustainability is what makes it different from a single donation or series of donations. The Centre for Philanthropy ensures that when a philanthropic trust is established, the funds are well-managed and the terms of their use are governed by a trust deed which is strictly adhered to. It is different from a charitable donation or gift because it is strategic and sustainable, and the support of a charity or cause can continue for many years. You can set it up during your lifetime or under the terms of your will.

What causes can people support?

Anything they like. People often want to support a cause that affected them or their loved ones. Some people want to invest in research into the prevention or cure of specific diseases. Others might have a passion for the environment, the arts or supporting local community initiatives. It's entirely up to each philanthropist – the Centre's job is to help people define clearly what they want to achieve, protect and grow the funds they have established and to ensure that it is used as they would wish.

How do you see philanthropy developing over time?

Long-term I hope we will achieve an advancement of philanthropy and the understanding of it among New Zealanders – when many people think of philanthropists they picture Bill Gates or Warren Buffett giving away billions, but philanthropy is no more or less worthy depending on the scale. It's defined as private giving to meet a social need or effect some kind of change for the better, and that will mean something different to everyone. That's the richness of it.

For further information on the Guardian Trust Centre for Philanthropy please call 0800 87 87 82 or email philanthropy@nzgt.co.nz.

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About Guardian Trust

Guardian Trust has been serving New Zealanders for 125 years and is a market leader in wealth management. It is one of New Zealand's foremost trustee companies in asset management and protection, providing wide-ranging advice and expertise in areas including estate planning and administration, mortgage finance, financial planning, and personal and corporate trusts.