

## **Trust for Australia's charities at highest level in six years; annual research report Royal Flying Doctor Service ranks number one, for sixth consecutive year**

The reputation of Australia's leading charities have recovered after two years of losing ground. Trust toward the sector by Australians is at the highest levels ever recorded since 2011, according to the 2016 Charity Reputation Index by research consultants, AMR.

Released this week, the annual index shows that more than half of Australia's 40 largest, most recognisable charities saw a significant increase in reputation scores. The overall charity index average increased 3.9 points, crossing the threshold from 'strong' in 2015 to 'excellent' this year, with the top 20 showing reputation scores better than the best ranked corporates in Australia.

For the sixth year in a row top honours went to Royal Flying Doctors Service with an impressive score of 96.9 out of possible 100 points, showing how providing a lifesaving service that addresses the needs of vulnerable outback communities resonates strongly with Australians.

The annual Charity Reputation Index surveys Australians<sup>1</sup> to measure the overall reputation of the country's 40 largest charities and ranks them accordingly using a scoring system. The measurement also includes a range of dimensions such as Services, Innovation, Workplace, Citizenship, Governance, Leadership and Cost Management.

AMR's Managing Director Oliver Freedman said the raw scores used to measure and rank charity reputation indicate that the sector has shown a marked improvement in trust and respect in the eyes of Australians compared to last year.

"The results this year are a clear indication that Australians still have an immense trust for the charity sector despite continued global economic uncertainty, driven recently by Brexit and the US election result," he said. "Charities such as Royal Flying Doctor Service continue to top the index as they have an authentic and sincere message and service, which resonates with Australians and helps the high level of trust felt towards them."

Freedman said the Royal Flying Doctor Service ranked first across all the individual measurements of Services, Innovation, Workplace, Citizenship, Governance, Leadership and Cost Management. It is the first time a charity has ranked first across all these dimensions.

"The RFDS has now ranked first for the sixth year running. The consistent level of trust, admiration and respect highlights the ongoing emotional attachment felt by Australians and the fact the Service was ranked first across all reputation categories speaks volumes for the organisation's solid foundation," said Freedman.

However, Freedman also commented that despite the overall lift, there are several charities that have been unable to rise with the tide of positivity.

"Interestingly despite the ranking declines none of the charities saw significant decline in overall reputation score," said Freedman. "This clearly indicates that merely having a stable reputation

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<sup>1</sup> n=6,909. Data was collected from 27 October 2016 to 16 November 2016.

score is not good enough to maintain your ranking in a sector where competition for donations is fierce.”

This year the bottom-ranked charities saw much larger improvements than their top-tier peers. While still ranked within the bottom tier, the four environmental charities have also seen their best improvements since 2011. Although Greenpeace is still ranked 40<sup>th</sup> it has closed the gap compared to the charities ranked 31 to 40.

The increased focus on mental health has shown to be helping the charities that operate in this part of the sector, with Beyond Blue consistently in the top five, and new entrant Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation sitting with the more traditional top tier charities.

After two years, Salvation Army’s score is back to levels seen in 2012, however its rank is seven places lower than in 2012, indicating it has not fully recovered relative to other charities from the significant decline seen in 2014.

AMR is part of WPP AUNZ, Australasia’s leading marketing content and communications group.

**Ends.**

**A full list of 2016 Charity Reputation Rankings follows.**

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#### **Note to editors**

##### **About the Charity Reputation Index:**

The Charity Reputation Index is produced each year by research consultants AMR, which also produces the annual Corporate Reputation Index, Country Reputation Index and City Reputation Index.

The Charity Reputation Index collates insight directly from consumers, and does not rely on any information provided by the organisations being studied.

The list of the 40 Australian charities studied in the Charity Reputation Index is compiled by AMR using data published by The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) the independent national regulator of charities. Several criteria are used to select charities.

In addition to collating overall reputation, the Charity Reputation Index also measures how Australians feel about each of the 40 charities according to seven parameters; Services, Innovation, Workplace, Citizenship, Governance, Leadership and Cost Management.

The Charity Reputation Index surveys Australian Adults aged 18 and older using an online panel, with results weighted to ensure they represent appropriate gender and age groups nationally. For the 2016 index, n=6,909. Data was collected in November 2016.

Above 80	Excellent/Top Tier
70-79	Strong/Robust
60-69	Average/Moderate
40-59	Weak/Vulnerable
Below 40	Poor/Bottom Tier

CHARITY REPUTATION RANKINGS (n=6,909)	2016	2015	CHANGE
Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia	1	1	-
St John Ambulance	2	6	+4
Beyond Blue Ltd	3	4	+1
Guide Dogs	4	2	-2
National Breast Cancer Foundation	5	10	+5
The Fred Hollows Foundation	6	3	-3
McGrath Foundation	7	9	+2
Médecins Sans Frontières Australia (Doctors Without Borders)	8	5	-3
Starlight Children's Foundation	9	8	-1
Ronald McDonald House Charities	10	-	NEW
Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation Ltd	11	-	NEW
Camp Quality	12	7	-5
The Movember Foundation	13	-	NEW
Australian Red Cross	14	12	-2
Surf Life Saving Foundation	15	13	-2
Diabetes Australia	16	14	-2
RSPCA	17	16	-1
Cancer Council Australia	18	11	-7
The Salvation Army	19	17	-2
St Vincent de Paul Society	20	19	-1
Cerebral Palsy Alliance	21	26	+5
National Heart Foundation of Australia	22	15	-7
Vision Australia Ltd	23	29	+6
Multiple Sclerosis Ltd	24	27	+3
Wesley Mission	25	21	-4
Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)	26	22	-4
Save the Children Australia	27	24	-3
The Smith Family	28	20	-8
CARE Australia	29	35	+6
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)	30	18	-12
Mission Australia	31	38	+7
UNICEF Australia	32	31	-1
The Wilderness Society	33	32	-1
Barnardos Australia	34	23	-11
Australian Conservation Foundation	35	25	-10
yourtown (previously known as BoysTown)	36	39	+3
Oxfam Australia	37	30	-7
World Vision Australia	38	34	-4
Amnesty International Australia	39	37	-2
Greenpeace Australia Pacific	40	40	-