

the difference

issue two... 2012

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Introducing the people behind the 2012 issue of The Difference. Their ideas and vision are changing the community you live in. For the better.



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The Difference uses a unique design and communication style to convey our message. There are no actors. These are real people with real accounts of living within the indicators and real messages of what this means. Every person profiled has completed a consent and release form and understand that you, the reader, will respect their right to privacy.

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

*An annual **report card** on the indicators of poverty and exclusion in Australia*

*An **introduction** to Australians who live within those indicators*

*An **invitation** to engage with your community*

*A **guide** to social investment*

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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our second issue of *The Difference*.

From our first, the feedback from media, government, philanthropic and corporate leaders was instructive.

One reader spoke to me directly about the magazine's ambition to reduce levels of poverty and exclusion through research and social investment. He argued "It can't be done...Jesus said the poor will always be with us." Good point. But Jesus never said how many poor there should be.

Another commented that government was responsible for these issues. If that were the case, a very big government it would indeed take to replace the responsibility we all have for the communities we live in and want to feel connected to. And of course, government runs on taxes, sourced largely from the people who can pay them, the same origin as social investment, but without the long, circuitous, inefficient pathway and reduction in sum and intent by layers of process, arbitrage and measure.

Another reader said they wanted to give to causes they felt really close to and that they felt no such closeness to people in *The Difference*.

That despite our publishing their photos and their words, the people in the magazine were strangers. And anyhow, for every person like Sharon on last year's front cover, there were 1,000 others like her unseen.

Several people also said this publication was really about furthering the organisers' careers. Well, I don't get paid for this and the production team can think of many easier ways to earn money. But the stories here need telling.

These same people spoke about their decision to not drive in particular parts of the city they lived in, or not to use public transport, because they were too upset by social issues and that opening *The Difference* was too depressing for them.

It would be good if something could be done, they said. Particularly for issues that could affect them directly, like street crime. Yes it would be good if someone did something about that.

Further readers raised the very good point that these issues were for another audience, that people with the ability to fund the prevention programs we had presented were already fully committed. This was said to us in turn by representatives of government, philanthropy and the corporate sector.

We discovered more feedback like this the further we moved from the people in our direct circle of influence until we reached a point where *The Difference* was interpreted as

Here is fertile soil for planting second chances... That's why we do this, to raise up a crop of hope and transformation for people who share the entitlement of our citizenship, despite the events and the problems that have dogged them.

- NIC BOLTO

just another begging letter in a crowded space of charities asking for money. Apart from the readers who were compelled to action.

To those who contributed to the projects, we know the value of your commitment was real, especially those mystery donors who debunked the messages above just by giving.

The people we profiled, like Sharon, are the reason there is an issue two. Traction on this year's projects in the centre pages of *The Difference* are important to the people in this year's issue and to the research we present.

The Difference is important to them. Research on giving confirms it can be important, and beneficial for both parties.

This year we have focussed as much as possible on the issues for young people. Some of the indicators have changed from last year. Some of the areas we feel are central to the containment of inequity and triggers for further rises in the indicators in later years have been included.

Thank you so much to the people who made *The Difference* possible. Our patrons, our production team and our partners.

I hope you find this year's issue of *The Difference* a compelling read.



Nic Bolto
Editor
15 May 2012



The Difference: Issue One
(Last year's issue)

