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Give &

GET BACK

A workplace-giving program is one of the easiest and most accessible ways to donate to charity, and its benefits extend beyond the organisations receiving the funds.

WORDS SKYE HOKLAS • IMAGES COURTESY OF AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES FUND

Less than five per cent of people working in Australia participate in a workplace-giving program, according to recent Australian Tax Office figures. It's a statistic the Australian Charities Fund (ACF) is hoping to change. The not-for-profit organisation has bold plans to see one million Australians donating a small portion of their pay packet to charitable organisations by 2020, as part of its One Million Donors campaign. While it might sound like an ambitious plan, CEO Jenny Geddes trusts that it's possible, especially with big corporates such as Atlassian, JB Hi-Fi, BHP, Starbucks and Seek already on side.

"ACF advocates for workplace giving as the most effective way for working Australians to support charity," Jenny explains. "Achieving the aim of One Million Donors would create an additional \$250 million each year for those in need. This cost-effective approach to donating has the potential to transform the giving landscape in Australia."

To make the initiative even more attractive to businesses across the nation, ACF runs an annual Workplace Giving Excellence Awards ceremony. "Many leading employers put workplace giving at the heart of their internal engagement programs, which has proven to have a great impact on their people and culture, and ultimately their business," Jenny

says. "It's a highly effective way to unify a workforce around a common goal, and it's a powerful tool for bringing organisational values to life. Through the awards, we're able to celebrate workplace giving success stories, and hopefully inspire more employers and their staff to get involved."

With entries for the 2017 Workplace Giving Excellence Awards about to open, *The CEO Magazine* chats to some of the winners from 2016 about why they got involved and how it has helped their businesses.

"While each giving program was very different in nature, they had commonalities – superb leadership, excellent communication and strong relationships with their charity partner," Jenny adds.

"Having a workplace giving program shows staff that the company is focused on things that are not just business-performance related. It proves the company has a wider view of the community and allows staff to be part of that." – Craig Lowe, General Manager Customer Service, Macquarie Telecom, Winner of 'Best Launch or Refresh (Small Employer)'



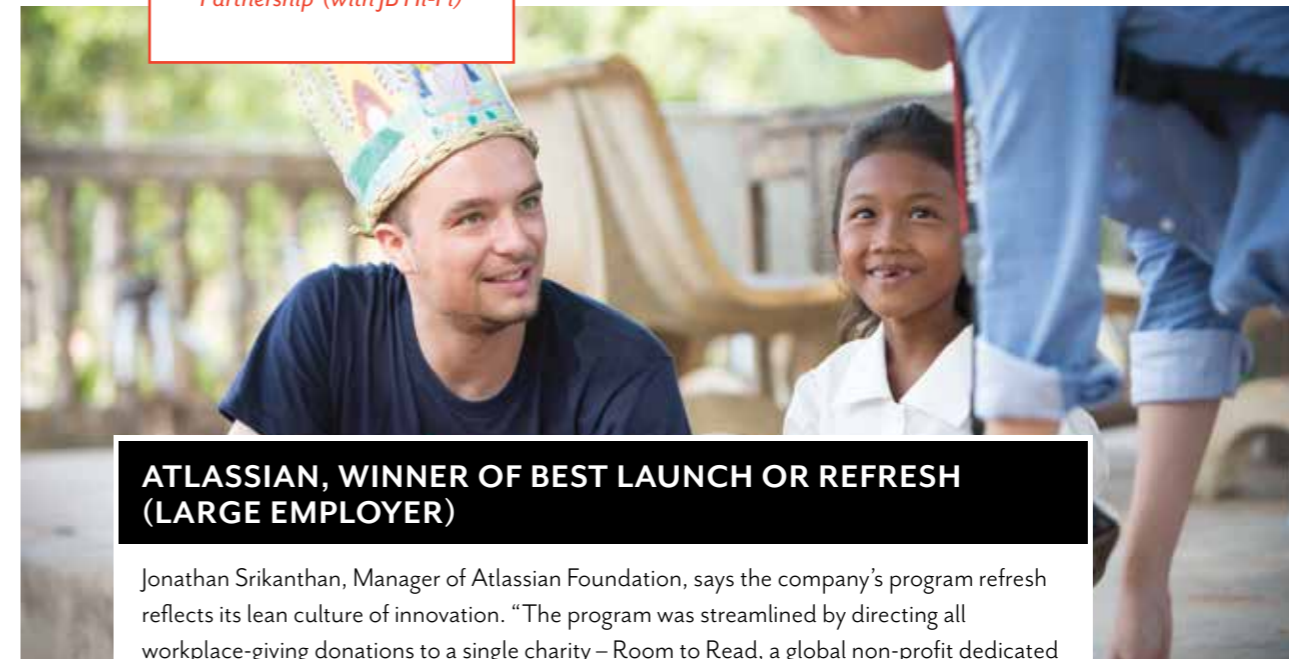
JB HI-FI, WINNER OF BEST OVERALL PROGRAM

"We commenced our giving program, Helping Hands, in 2008 following an assessment of ways for our business to contribute to the community," says Richard Murray, Group CEO of JB Hi-Fi. "We decided to select workplace giving as it's the most cost-effective and efficient way to contribute to the community. The simplicity, the immediacy and the results resonate with our teams, and we now have 70 per cent of staff participating in the program."

JB Hi-Fi dollar-matches all staff donations, and runs exclusive instore campaigns to support its two charity partners – Redkite, which helps young people fighting cancer, and The Song Room, which supports disadvantaged children through music and art.

Richard's tips for other businesses looking to get involved include making the program simple and aligning it with causes and charities that appeal to staff. Participation from company leadership is also key – JB Hi-Fi's board and executive team give one per cent of their salaries to their program. "Workplace giving is not only the right thing to do for our people and the community; it's amazing for employee engagement. I encourage sharing the results and outcomes of the program as you share other data in the organisation."

"JB Hi-Fi's Helping Hand program is the backbone of the partnership. Its team members give a little from their pay every week and, now with the 'superheroes' campaign, they've hit \$1 million." – Jenni Seton, CEO, Redkite, Winner of 'Most Innovative Charity/Employer Partnership' (with JB Hi-Fi)



ATLISSIAN, WINNER OF BEST LAUNCH OR REFRESH (LARGE EMPLOYER)

Jonathan Srikanthan, Manager of Atlassian Foundation, says the company's program refresh reflects its lean culture of innovation. "The program was streamlined by directing all workplace-giving donations to a single charity – Room to Read, a global non-profit dedicated to improving literacy and gender equality in education for children across Asia and Africa. It was aligned to the company's new community investment strategy – a commitment to the education of young Cambodian women – and the sign-up process was simplified to a single click. Donations then come directly out of people's pay without further action."

He adds that Atlassian offered limited-edition hoodies to the first 100 people who signed up to the program and in 43 minutes they were all gone. "The refresh of our giving program increased overall workforce participation by approximately 40 per cent in just 12 months," Jonathan notes. "To date, Atlassian has donated more than \$6.4 million to Room to Read, which has provided more than 260,000 children access to education." ■

Nominations for the 2017 Workplace Giving Excellence Awards are open until 25 August, ahead of the presentation ceremony to be held in Melbourne on 2 November. For more information on setting up a workplace-giving program or to enter, go to 1MDonors.org.au.