
Andrew and Nicola Forrest Australia

Dear Bill and Warren,

Nicola and I are honoured to be inaugural members of the new group of international (non U.S.) pledgers. We join you in the common hope that our example may give others in similar fortunate circumstances pause for thought. Accordingly, we say the following:

Dear readers, and indeed any person who is considering philanthropy,

As a family we agreed many years ago to give away the majority of our wealth. We felt that if our children were to inherit considerable wealth, it would only get in the way of them striving for and achieving their best, and truly making a positive difference in other people's lives.

As you contemplate your own long term choices in life, perhaps consider joining us. Then consider also committing the same leadership, passion and determination that created your wealth, to the causes you believe in. Giving your most precious gift – your talent, time and capital will ensure the most powerful result.

Nicola and I grew up in Australia, a prosperous country whose friendly people share a deep desire to help others least fortunate. A country that affords opportunities born of education, democracy, respect for law and title, and an independent judiciary. Australians cherish their freedom to accumulate capital and distribute it, in the manner they consider best. We are proud that our fellow countrymen, in any crisis, always show willingness to do what they can, with whatever they have to help others. Taking our cue from them and the book that has guided much of our lives to date, the New Testament, we have focussed on helping those least fortunate. In our country, Indigenous Australians form part of a proportion of those least fortunate. Globally, it is those suffering the unbearable yoke of modern slavery, which infects every country.

Nicola and I resist the temptation and pressure to alleviate suffering through short term solutions, such as cash handouts. This can ultimately weaken the very people that it is intended to help. Instead we choose to construct long term solutions, often through responsible collaboration with governments and other organisations. Our aim is to significantly improve people's lives through encouraging freedom, education, training and opportunity, thereby providing them with the greatest gift of all – individual personal empowerment and freedom from poverty.

We believe in every child's inalienable right to receive and benefit from education. They had no say in joining our world so it is our responsibility to give them safe passage when they arrive into it. Education provides the foundation to break the cycle of poverty and lack of freedom. Perhaps even more, it gives parents the exhilaration to realise that there are far greater outcomes available for them and their children than they may have ever dreamt possible.

It is for these reasons that we pledge, with the love and support of our children, to shine a light on inequality and share the vast majority of our wealth. We hope to help empower individuals and families currently suffering the despair of poverty, slavery and the lack of opportunity for themselves and their children. We feel that if we all do whatever we can with whatever we have, large or small, then each of us will help make our world a more equitable and positive environment for others to thrive in.

We humbly ask that with your philanthropy and your time, you also consider helping those who do not enjoy the gifts of life we have been so fortunate to receive.