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AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION

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Vodafone Australia Foundation chooses Queenslander to help change the world

After a promised job fell through in late 2003, an Australian man found himself homeless and battling illness on the streets of China with no money, food or passport. A little over two years later, that same man has been handpicked by the Vodafone Australia Foundation as one of the four successful applicants for the World of Difference program.

Paddington's Craig Hill, a 45-year-old former teacher is one of four Australians chosen by the Foundation to follow his passion by spending the next year working for his chosen charity – *The Big Issue* – as part of the Foundation's World of Difference program.

The Vodafone Australia Foundation World of Difference program gives Craig the chance to 'donate himself' to *The Big Issue* with his salary (up to \$50,000) and related expenses (up to \$25,000) covered for the next year by the Foundation.

"Thanks to the World of Difference program, I can actively help homeless people find housing and offer support through their battles with family, drugs, alcohol and gambling," Craig said.

"I have lived on the streets and know these people don't want hand outs. *The Big Issue* vendors want the opportunity to work and build their lives again. The magazine is integral to making this happen so it means the world to me to be able to help others in the same boat I was in a few years back."

Along with Craig, three other Australians will also receive funding to work for their favourite charity, including:

- Natalie Bower, 29, a Waverley (NSW) office manager and registered music therapist will put her musical skills to the test at not-for-profit organisation KidsXpress to help deliver therapeutic music programs for kids going through traumatic times.
- Sandy Fernée, 35, an office manager from Fitzroy (VIC) will be giving up her day job to dedicate more time to her existing volunteer work with Wildlife Victoria, where she will research and manage rescue programs for sick and orphaned animals.
- Thelma Thomas, 30, a Hip-Hop artist from Western Sydney (NSW) will use her musical contacts and personal background to help other multicultural young Australians from

Western Sydney express themselves through musical projects. She joins the Information and Cultural Exchange organisation for the year.

According to the Chairman of the Vodafone Australia Foundation, David White, the four were standouts among the hundreds of applications received.

"Since the application period for the program opened in January this year, we have been flooded with hundreds of applications from every state in Australia. We evaluated each and every one and enlisted the help of our current World of Difference successful applicants to ensure our successful applicants would be making a world of difference in 2006," David said.

"Deciding on the final four was always going to be difficult but I'm confident Craig, Natalie, Thelma and Sandy can really make a lasting impact for their charities. They all now have the financial leg-up to turn their charitable passions and ideas into action."

World of Difference ambassador and *Looking for Alibrandi* star Pia Miranda said the four chosen were an inspiration.

"It's very humbling to hear some of the stories applicants have told this year. It's obvious many people want to do more than just donate money – they want to get out there and physically help their favourite charities," Pia said.

"Sandy, Craig, Natalie and Thelma all have different backgrounds but are linked by a common goal – to make a difference to the world around them. Each one of them has been personally touched by the issues affecting their chosen organisations so they will be driven to make their year a success."

All four will be supported by a salary package up to \$50,000 and related expenses up to \$25,000 in order to apply their skills and passion to make a real difference. The Vodafone Australia Foundation will work closely with the four successful applicants, following their progress over the 12-month period.

Now in its third year, the World of Difference program is unique to Australia. It is the only corporate social responsibility program in the country giving Australians the opportunity to work for their favourite charity for a year, fully funded and fully supported by a company.

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Interviews / images available

Vodafone World of Difference winners, Craig Hill, Sandy Fernée, Natalie Bower and Thelma Thomas will be available in their home cities on Thursday 4 May for interviews and photography.

High-resolution imagery of the winners with Pia Miranda is available upon request.

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact:

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About Vodafone Australia Foundation

The Vodafone Australia Foundation is a charitable trust funded by Vodafone Australia and Vodafone Group Foundation. In line with Vodafone's core value of 'passion for the world around us', the foundation supports local charities and not-for-profit organisations. The Vodafone Australia Foundation also creates opportunities for Vodafone staff to contribute to the community, an initiative encouraged by Vodafone Australia.

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