

# WHO GIVES?

## INSIGHTS FROM GIVENOW DATA ANALYSIS 2001-2016

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**ourcommunity.com.au**  
Where not-for-profits go for help





# CONTENTS

<b>List of figures</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>List of tables</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Definitions</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>At a glance: GiveNow insights</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Donations</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Causes</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Interest areas</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>About the author</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>About GiveNow</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>About Our Community</b>	<b>61</b>

# LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1: Individual donations over time</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Figure 2: Number of donations per amount (up to \$100)</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Figure 3: One-off versus regular donations over time</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Figure 4: Changes in preferred suggested amount over time</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Figure 5: Number of recurrences of every regular donation amount</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Figure 6: Lifetime value per regular donation</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Figure 7: Average donation per month and per year, for donations \$1,000 and under</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Figure 8: Average donation per month</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Figure 9: Average value of one-off donations by days of the week</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Figure 10: Number of one-off donations per day of the week, as percentage</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Figure 11: One-off donations of \$1,000 and under, per hour</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Figure 12: Percentage of one-off donations made in every hour of the week</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Figure 13: Total amount raised per cause and number of donations to that cause</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Figure 14: Donations by interest area</b>	<b>39</b>

<b>Figure 15: Annual donations to the five most popular interest areas, as a percentage of all donations to those areas</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Figure 16: Number and average value of donations, by gender</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Figure 17: Total donations by gender and donation type</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Figure 18: Annual donations by gender and donation type, as a percentage of all donations</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Figure 19: Percentage of donations per interest area, divided by gender</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Figure 20: Average donation versus median taxable income by postcode</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Figure 21: “Heatmap” of GiveNow donations by donor postcode</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Figure 22: Melbourne heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Figure 23: Sydney heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Figure 24: Brisbane heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Figure 25: Adelaide heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Figure 26: Perth heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Figure 27: Canberra heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Figure 28: Hobart heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total</b>	<b>58</b>

# LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1: Top five most popular donation amounts</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Table 2: Average donation value for one-off and regular donations</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Table 3: Average donation per month</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Table 4: Mean and median donations per cause</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Table 5: Most generous postcodes on GiveNow</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Table 6: Top 10 suburbs by per-capita average donation value</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Table 7: Top five Vic suburbs by percentage of donations in the state</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Table 8: Top five NSW suburbs by percentage of donations in the state</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Table 9: Top five Qld suburbs and cities by percentage of donations in the state</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Table 10: Top five SA suburbs and cities by percentage of donations in the state</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Table 11: Top five WA suburbs and towns by percentage of donations in the state</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Table 12: Top five ACT suburbs by percentage of donations in the territory</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Table 13: Top five Tas suburbs by percentage of donations in the state</b>	<b>58</b>

# DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
GIVENOW	An online donations platform, <a href="http://www.givenow.com.au">www.givenow.com.au</a>
OUR COMMUNITY	The organisation behind GiveNow, <a href="http://www.ourcommunity.com.au">www.ourcommunity.com.au</a>
USER	A person who makes a donation through GiveNow, i.e. a donor
ORGANISATION	A not-for-profit organisation that has listed one or more causes on GiveNow (e.g. Springfield Animal Welfare Coalition)
CAUSE	A specific cause, program or campaign, listed by an organisation, that users can donate to (e.g. Springfield Home for Lost Dogs)
INTEREST AREA	The subject or focus of a cause (e.g. animal welfare)
ONE-OFF DONATION	A single, one-off donation
REGULAR DONATION	A periodic donation, repeated each month for a duration set by the user (can be indefinite)
MYGIVING	A facility available to registered users whereby they can see their donation history and manage their regular donations

## PARAMETERS

This report is a study of the behaviour of GiveNow users. To extrapolate the findings to all donors in Australia would require first identifying a core sample representative of the entire Australian donor population in terms of age and other variables. GiveNow doesn't currently collect data on the age of users.

## PRIVACY

GiveNow respects the privacy of donors and organisations and does not share data except for the purposes outlined in its privacy policy. This report and analysis do not identify any individual organisations or donors. To read GiveNow's privacy policy, go to [www.ourcommunity.com.au/general/general\\_article.jsp?articleId=2161](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/general/general_article.jsp?articleId=2161).



# INTRODUCTION

**GiveNow is Australia's first online donations platform and its only commission-free service. Since its establishment in 2001, GiveNow has raised almost \$70 million from over 600,000 donors for more than 3,500 causes across the country.**

Consequently, GiveNow holds a trove of data about donors, donations and causes. Now, for the first time, Our Community has undertaken a groundbreaking analysis of this data and is uniquely placed to share insights into donor behaviour that have never before been understood. This study represents the Australian community sector's first ever access to such extensive, rigorous data analysis.

We set out to examine five key areas of donor behaviour and characteristics:

## DONATIONS

Do donors prefer to give one-off donations or regular donations? What donation amounts are the most popular? In what months, days and hours do users donate the most?

## CAUSES

The number and value of donations to any particular cause is a product of that cause's general popularity, visibility and geographical location. What can we learn from examining causes?

## INTEREST AREAS

Animal welfare, disaster relief, health and wellness – do certain interest areas attract more donations? How has this changed over time?

## GENDER

What are the donation habits of men and women? Who donates the most, and to what interest areas?

## LOCATION

Where do the most generous donors come from? What's the relationship between donor behaviour and donor income?

## MORE INFORMATION

If you have any queries about the data used in this report, please get in touch with the author, Joost Van Der Linden: [joostl@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:joostl@ourcommunity.com.au).

For general queries about GiveNow, please contact us by email ([donations@givenow.com.au](mailto:donations@givenow.com.au)) or telephone (03 9320 6848).

# AT A GLANCE

With this report we aim to shine a light on the trends shaping online fundraising in Australia.

We want not-for-profit organisations to apply our key findings to shape their fundraising strategy, to strengthen their financial position, and ultimately to help them to fulfil their mission.



**REGULAR GIVING**  
is growing in popularity.

**IN** regular monthly donations  
**2012** OVERTOOK ONE-OFF  
**2012** donations as the most  
**POPULAR FORM**  
**2012** OF GIVING ON GIVENOW.

**THE MOST POPULAR**  
**type of donation**

..... IS THE .....  
**REGULAR monthly**  
**\$25 DONATION.**



A ONE-OFF DONATION IS WORTH MORE THAN A REGULAR DONATION

That is, on average, the value of a ONE-OFF DONATION **(\$205)**

IS HIGHER THAN THE VALUE OF A SINGLE TRANSACTION

**(\$43)** that is part of a REGULAR MONTHLY DONATION.



WHEN DONORS SIGN UP TO MAKE REGULAR MONTHLY DONATIONS, THEY MAINTAIN THE



commitment on average

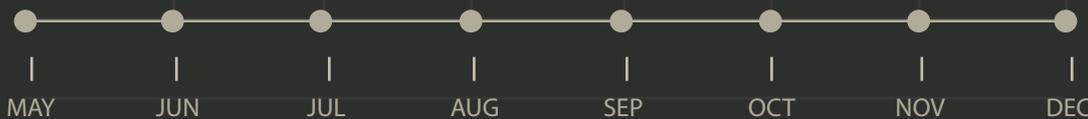
for just OVER **1** YEAR **&** **5** MONTHS

THE AVERAGE TOTAL VALUE  
of a regular donation  
OVER ITS LIFESPAN IS **\$789**

THIS IS FAR MORE VALUABLE THAN  
THE AVERAGE  
ONE-OFF donation **\$205**



JUNE AND DECEMBER  
SEE HUGE SPIKES IN DONOR ACTIVITY



The number and value of one-off  
donations peak at the end of the  
**FINANCIAL YEAR**  
AND DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.

This is true for big gifts  
(\$1,000-PLUS)  
AS WELL AS SMALL ONES (UNDER \$100)



THE BUSIEST TIME FOR GIVENOW  
is **11am–4pm**  
Monday to Thursday

MONDAY IS THE MOST  
LUCRATIVE DAY:  
THIS IS WHEN THE  
**average value**  
OF DONATIONS  
IS HIGHEST. 

**Giving is not keeping  
PACE WITH INFLATION.**

The annual average  
VALUE OF DONATIONS  
**has not changed**  
SIGNIFICANTLY IN

**10**  
YEARS



The typical donation varies a lot from one interest area to the next.

---

For example,  **ANIMAL WELFARE**

**causes** RECEIVE MANY small donations.



While

---

**ARTS & CULTURE**

 RECEIVE RELATIVELY few donations,

BUT THEY TEND TO BE much higher in value.  

---



**Women make more DONATIONS THAN MEN.**

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HOWEVER, MEN DONATE larger amounts.

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AS A RESULT, WOMEN AND MEN DONATE ROUGHLY



**EQUAL amounts.**





IF WE LOOK AT  
ONE-OFF DONATIONS,

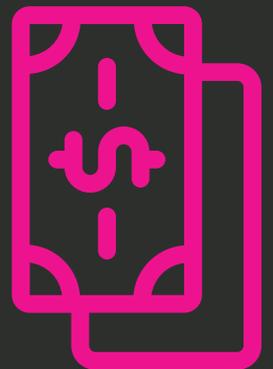
we find that **men** donate  
MORE IN TOTAL THAN WOMEN.



IF WE LOOK AT REGULAR DONATIONS,

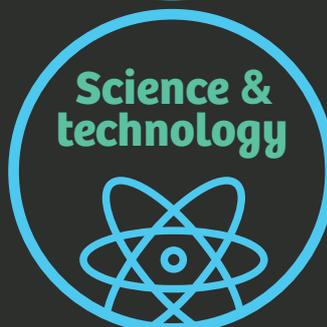
we find that **women**

DONATE MORE  
IN TOTAL  
than men.



OF OUR 22 INTEREST AREAS, MOST ARE  
far more popular with women than with men.

The reverse is true for only a few interest areas.  
More men than women donate to:



On the whole, people from wealthy areas don't necessarily give more than people from poor areas.



.....  
THAT IS, THERE IS A WIDE SPREAD IN THE **relationship between** MEDIAN INCOME AND AVERAGE DONATION.  
.....

High-income postcodes do not **NECESSARILY SHOW A HIGH AVERAGE DONATION,** AND **LOW-INCOME AREAS DO NOT NECESSARILY SHOW A low average donation.**



# BACKGROUND

**GiveNow is an online giving platform that connects donors with causes. Organisations list causes that users can view and donate to. After choosing a cause, a user is given the following donation options:**



How much would you like to give?

\$25  \$50  \$100  \$500  \$1000

Other DONATION AMOUNT \$

Furthermore, users choose between making a one-off donation, and making a regular monthly donation for a duration of their choice. Users are then forwarded to a page that asks for payment details.

Users with a GiveNow account can manage regular donations and view their donation history via the MyGiving facility.

## DATA SUMMARY

Every donation made and cause listed on GiveNow is recorded in a database. The database contains the following information:

Donation data	User data	Cause data	Organisation data
Time and date	Suburb	Name	Name
Amount	Postcode	Interest area	ABN
Cause	State	Description	Postcode
One-off or regular	Country	Status (open or closed)	Suburb
	Name prefix	Postcode	Country
		Suburb	URL
		Country	
		Date listed	

# QUICK STATISTICS

**Earliest recorded donation**  
**MARCH 7, 2001**

---

**Most recent donation used in this analysis**  
**AUGUST 22, 2016**

---

**Total number of donations**  
**582,851**

---

**Total number of causes**  
**3,919**

---

**Total number of unique users**  
**187,634**

---

**Total amount donated**  
**\$66,904,602.58**

---

**Highest recorded donation**  
**\$200,000**

---

**Most common one-off donation**  
**\$50**

---

**Most common regular donation**  
**\$25**

---

**Average amount of a one-off donation**  
**\$205**

---

Average recurrence of  
regular monthly donations

17.5 TIMES

Month with  
the most  
donations

JUNE

Most popular day for  
one-off donations

THURSDAY

Most popular hour  
for donating

11AM

Interest area  
with the largest  
amount raised

HEALTH  
& WELLBEING

Interest area  
with the highest  
average donation

ARTS  
& CULTURE

Suburb with the  
highest per-capita

average  
donation

SYDNEY,  
NSW

# DONATIONS

## DONATIONS OVER TIME

We wanted to obtain an overview of GiveNow donations over time. GiveNow processed a total of 582,851 donations between March 7, 2001 and August 22, 2016. In Figure 1 the value of every donation is plotted against time. Note that the vertical axis follows a logarithmic scale, in order to capture the full range of observations.

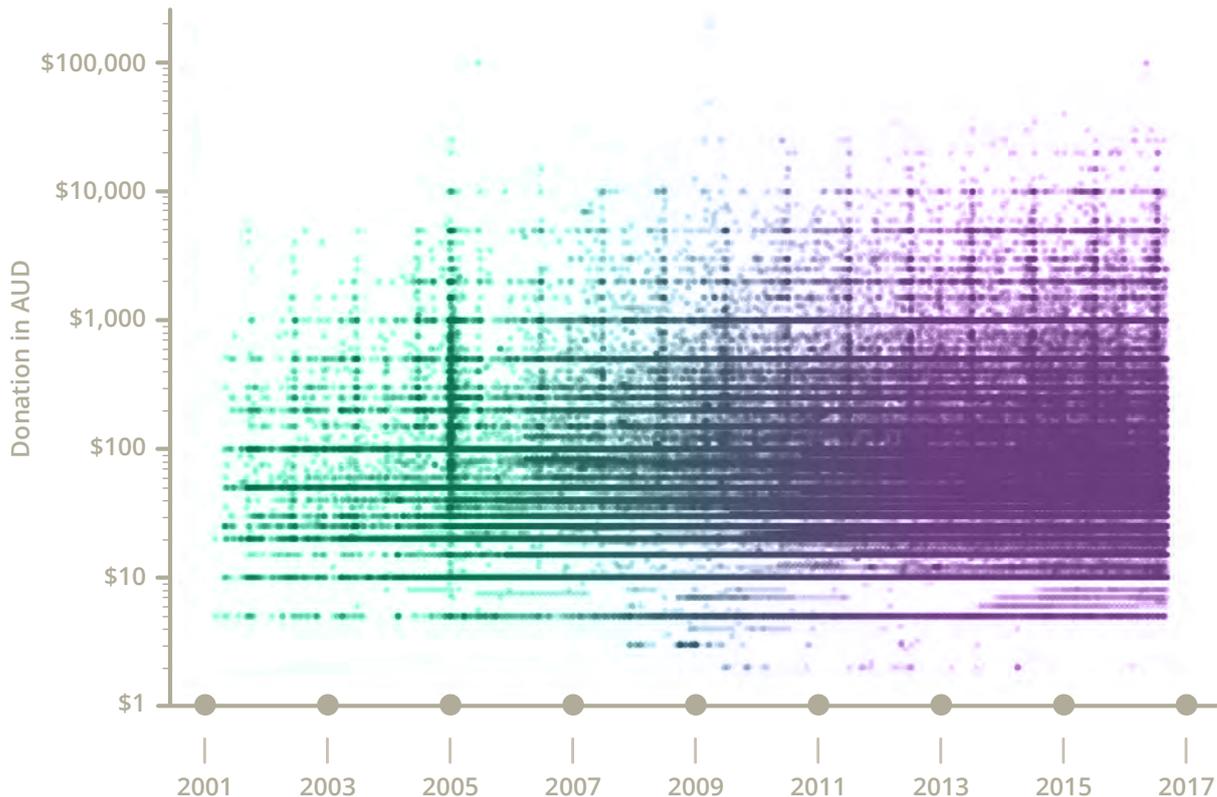


Figure 1: Individual donations over time

The density of the dots increases over time. This indicates increasing user activity, particularly in the \$10–100 range.

The horizontal lines reflect donation amounts that are particularly popular, such as \$10, \$100 and \$1,000.

The vertical lines coincide with periods of increased donation activity, such as the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami appeal (late 2004 and early 2005) and the repeated occurrence of the end of the tax year in June.

## WHAT ARE THE MOST POPULAR DONATION AMOUNTS?

Nearly 90% of all donations are of \$100 or less. Not surprisingly, the suggested amounts of \$25, \$50 and \$100 are most frequently chosen in this range, as shown in Figure 2.

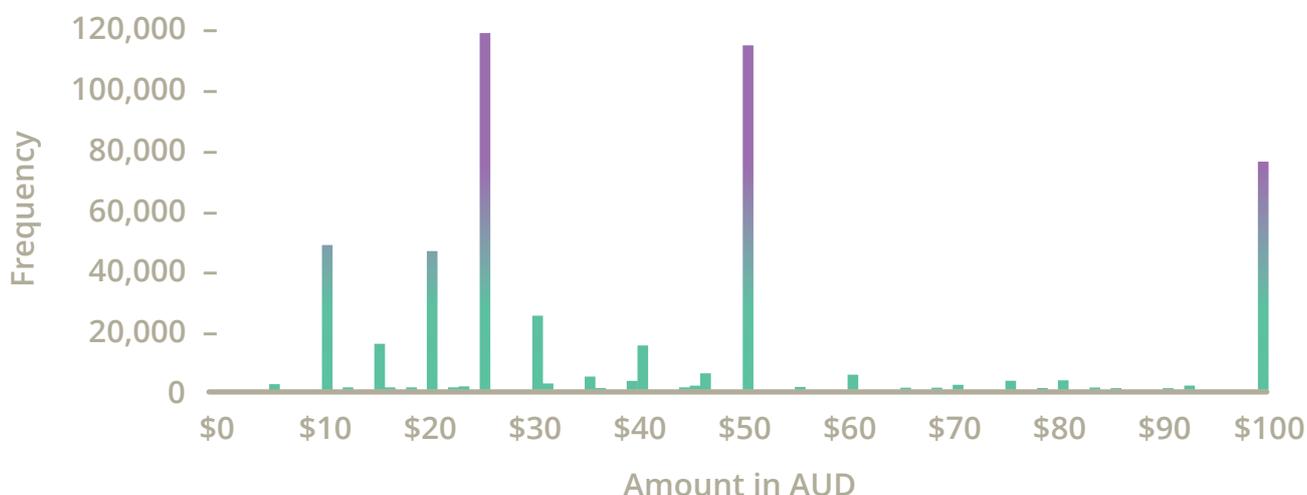


Figure 2: Number of donations per amount (up to \$100)

Less than 4% of all donations are in the range \$51–99, and the most popular manually entered “other” amounts do not fall into this range either. Rather, they are \$10, \$20, \$30 and \$40.

## INSIGHT

**Suggested amounts matter! Ongoing research at Our Community is aimed at optimising these suggested amounts. If the suggestions are too high, users may be turned off. If the suggestions are too low, money may be left on the table. What we do see is an opportunity to suggest donation amounts between \$50 and \$100.**

## REGULAR VERSUS ONE-OFF DONATIONS

Table 1 shows the top five most popular donations, distinguishing between one-off and regular donations, as well as between suggested and 'other' amounts.

		Suggested amounts		Other amounts	
One-off donations	<b>Top 5 donations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Top 5 donations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	
	\$50	56,627	\$200	14,122	
	\$100	54,480	\$20	10,629	
	\$25	33,272	\$10	10,621	
	\$500	12,122	\$250	6,920	
	\$1,000	6,528	\$30	5,488	
Total for top 5:		163,029	Total for top 5:	47,780	
Regular donations	<b>Top 5 donations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Top 5 donations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	
	\$25	86,025	\$10	37,467	
	\$50	58,482	\$20	35,557	
	\$100	21,638	\$30	18,798	
	\$500	466	\$15	12,813	
	\$1,000	437	\$40	11,500	
Total for top 5:		167,048	Total for top 5:	116,135	
Total		330,077	Total	163,915	
% all donations		56.6%	% all donations	28.1%	

**Table 1: Top five most popular donation amounts**

The most popular one-off donation is \$50, closely followed by \$100. Other amounts for one-off donations include both above-average (\$200, \$250) and below-average (\$10, \$20, \$30) donations.

By far the most popular regular donation is \$25. The top 5 for regular donations shows that the larger the suggested amount, the less frequently this amount is chosen. All top five "other amounts" chosen for regular donations are below \$50.

## INSIGHT

**For one-off donations, suggested amounts heavily influence the donor's decision on how much to donate. The influence is slightly less for regular donations.**

Table 1 shows us that regular donations are more popular than one-off donations. The amounts donated as regular donations, however, are generally lower than the amounts donated as one-off. This leads to the question: how do the four categories compare in terms of average donation and total amount donated? Table 2 provides the data.

		No. of donations	Average donation	Total amount
One-off donations	Suggested amounts	163,029	\$133	\$21,700,150
	Other amounts	95,711	\$326	\$31,243,763
	<b>Sub-total</b>	258,740	\$205	\$52,943,912
Regular donations	Suggested amounts	167,048	\$47	\$7,908,525
	Other amounts	157,063	\$39	\$6,052,165
	<b>Sub-total</b>	324,111	\$43	\$13,960,690
<b>Total</b>		582,851	\$115	\$66,904,602

Table 2: Average donation value for one-off and regular donations

Considering the differences between one-off and regular donations, the total number of regular donations is larger than the total number of one-off donations (324,11 versus 258,740, respectively). The average regular donation, on the other hand, is much smaller than the average one-off donation. As a result, even though regular donations are more frequent, the total value of one-off donations is much higher than the total value of regular donations: \$53 million versus \$14 million, respectively.

## SUGGESTED AMOUNTS VERSUS OTHER AMOUNTS

Table 2 shows that overall, “suggested amounts” are more popular with users than “other amount”, and they are particularly popular with one-off donors.

For regular donations, users choose “other amount” to enter small amounts under \$50, resulting in a low average donation (\$39). One-off donations of “other amount”, on the other hand, include higher amounts (\$200 and \$250) as popular choices. Moreover, high-end donors use “other amount” for donations over \$1,000, further skewing the average upwards.

## THE EFFECT OF LARGE DONATIONS

Table 2 may give the impression that one-off donations are much more lucrative for causes than regular donations. However, this result is shaped by the fact that large donations are more likely to be one-off than regular. Only 2% of all donations are \$1,000 or higher, yet, taken together, these donations make up almost 40% of the total amount donated on GiveNow. The vast majority of \$1,000-plus donations (96%) are one-off donations. The total amount donated via one-off donations (\$53 million) ends up much higher than the total amount donated via regular donations (\$14 million).

## INSIGHT

**On average, one-off donations are higher in value but less numerous than regular donations. Regular donations are lower in value but more numerous. Only 2% of donations are \$1,000 or higher, but they are highly lucrative for the organisations that manage to attract them.**

**It's also instructive to compare the value of the average one-off donation (\$205) to the average lifetime value of a regular donation (\$789). For more on this, see page 28.**

## ONE-OFF VERSUS REGULAR DONATIONS OVER TIME

The popularity of one-off and regular donations varies from month to month, as shown in Figure 3 for the period 2012–2015.

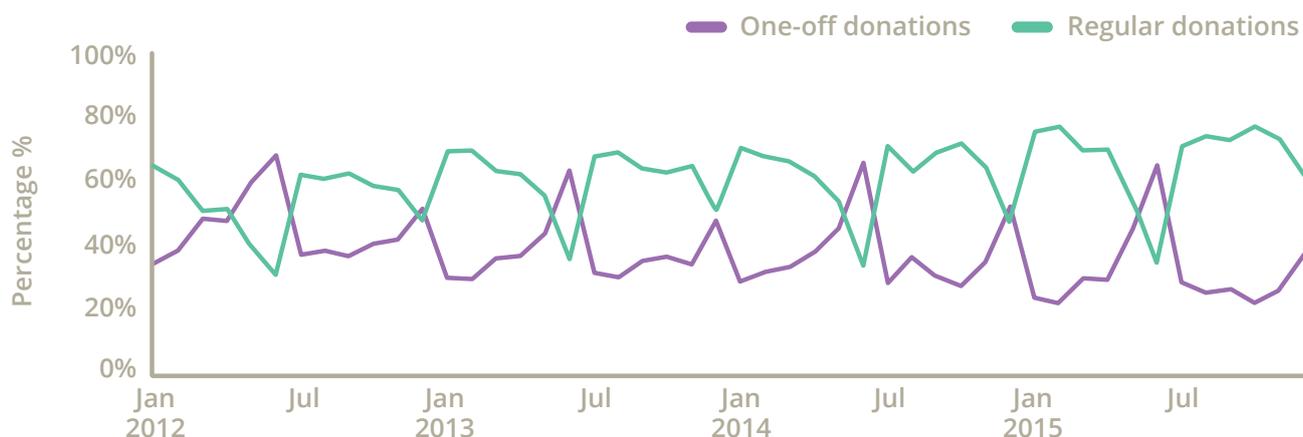


Figure 3: One-off versus regular donations over time

Regular donations are more numerous than one-off donations for most months, with two exceptions. At the end of the tax year (in June) one-off donations spike and overtake regular donations. The holiday season in December sees another spike in one-off donations. Overall, the proportion of regular donations has trended slightly upwards year to year since 2012.

### INSIGHT

**One-off donations spike in June and December. Organisations can use this knowledge to their advantage by specifically soliciting one-off donations during these months.**

## CHANGES IN PREFERRED SUGGESTED AMOUNT OVER TIME

In line with the increased popularity of regular donations over the past four years, the most popular suggested donation has gone down from \$50 to \$25 in the same period.

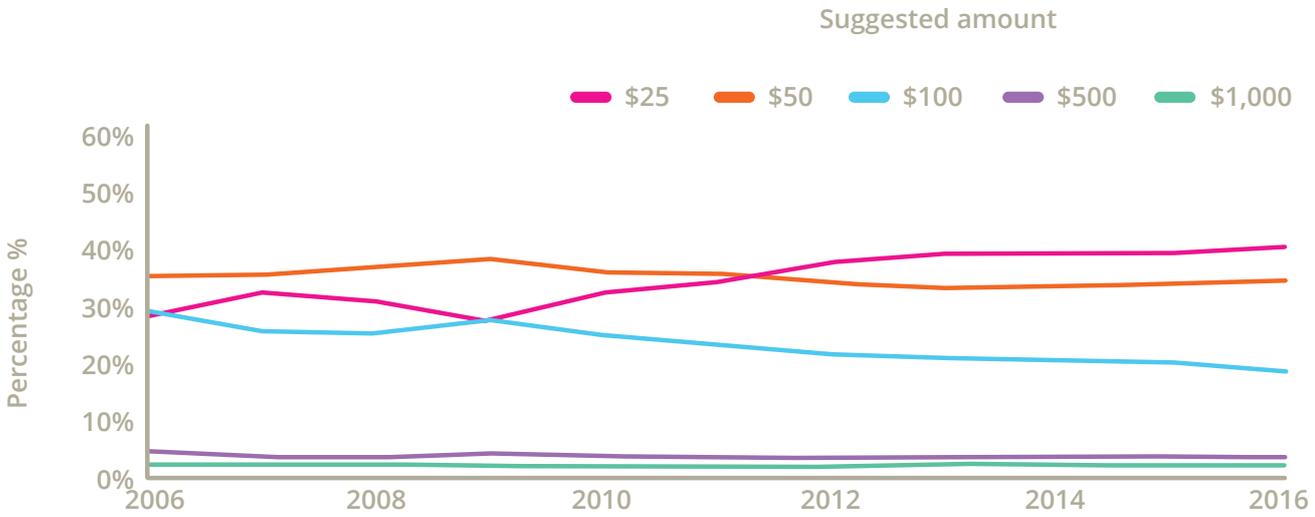


Figure 4: Changes in preferred suggested amount over time

Further investigation reveals that most of the increase in the proportion of \$25 donations stems from regular donations. The share of \$50, \$500 and \$1,000 donations has remained approximately constant, while the share of \$100 donations has decreased since 2009.

### INSIGHT

**Over the past four years, the small, regular donation of \$25 has become more popular than any other donation type.**

## FOR HOW LONG DO REGULAR DONORS DONATE?

Regular donations have the benefit of providing a steady income stream for organisations. So just how steady is “steady”? For how long do regular donors remain committed?

“Finished” regular donations on GiveNow are repeated, on average, 17.5 times. In other words, the average lifespan of a “finished” donation is just over one year and five months. (We regard a regular donation as “finished” if it is no longer being made.)

For organisations looking for donors willing to make a long-term regular commitment, one year and five months might seem like a fairly short time. However, it is important to note that of all the regular donations that have ever been started on GiveNow, only 38% of them have finished. In other words, 62% of them are ongoing. What’s more, regular giving on GiveNow is increasing in popularity, and a lot of these ongoing donations were started relatively recently.

The length and total value of the 9,922 ongoing regular donations cannot (yet) be determined. Among these ongoing regular donations there are many long-running donations that would increase the average lifespan and value of regular donations if they finished today and were included in the calculations.

Figure 5 provides an overview of all “finished” regular donations.

Note that some users who make regular donations adjust the amount of their donation from time to time. The data in Figure 5 assumes that adjusting the amount of the regular donation (which happened 1,717 times) “resets” the counter for the number of recurrences.

As shown, 91% of unadjusted regular donations are repeated 50 times or less and have a value between \$10 and \$100 per month.

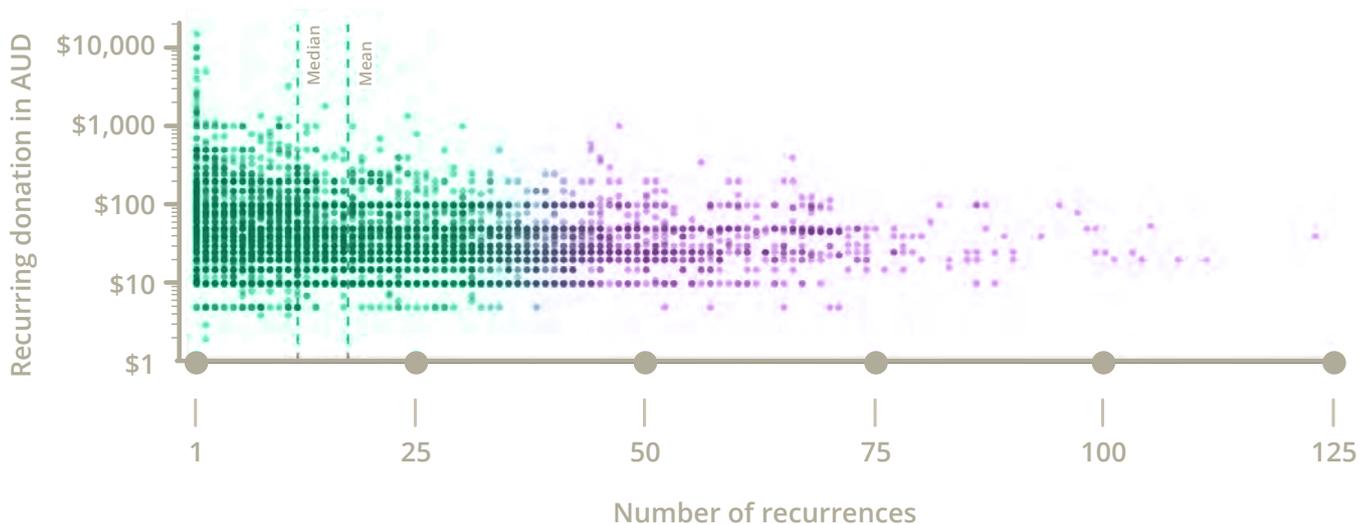


Figure 5: Number of recurrences of every regular donation amount

<sup>1</sup> The vertical axis in Figure 5 is logarithmic to incorporate all observations. Darker dots indicate a higher frequency.

## WHAT IS THE AVERAGE VALUE OF A REGULAR DONATION?

Over the lifespan of a regular donation, the average total amount donated is \$789. Figure 6 shows the distribution for total values up to \$3,000.

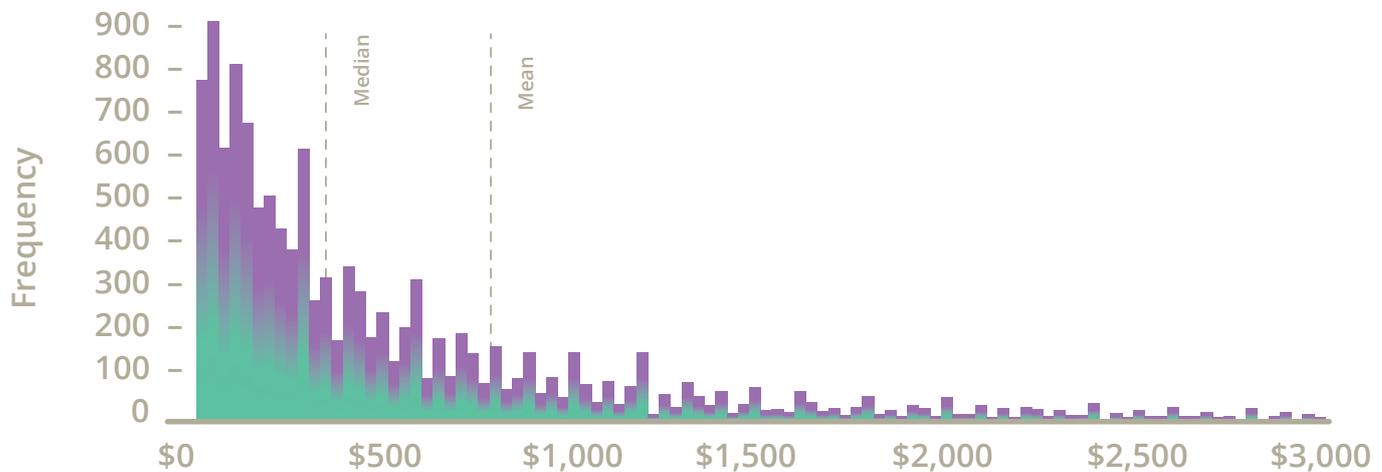


Figure 6: Lifetime value per regular donation

The difference between the mean and the median is caused by a number of outliers in the data. For example, several donations of \$1,000 repeated more than 25 times can be identified in [Figure 5](#) (page 27).

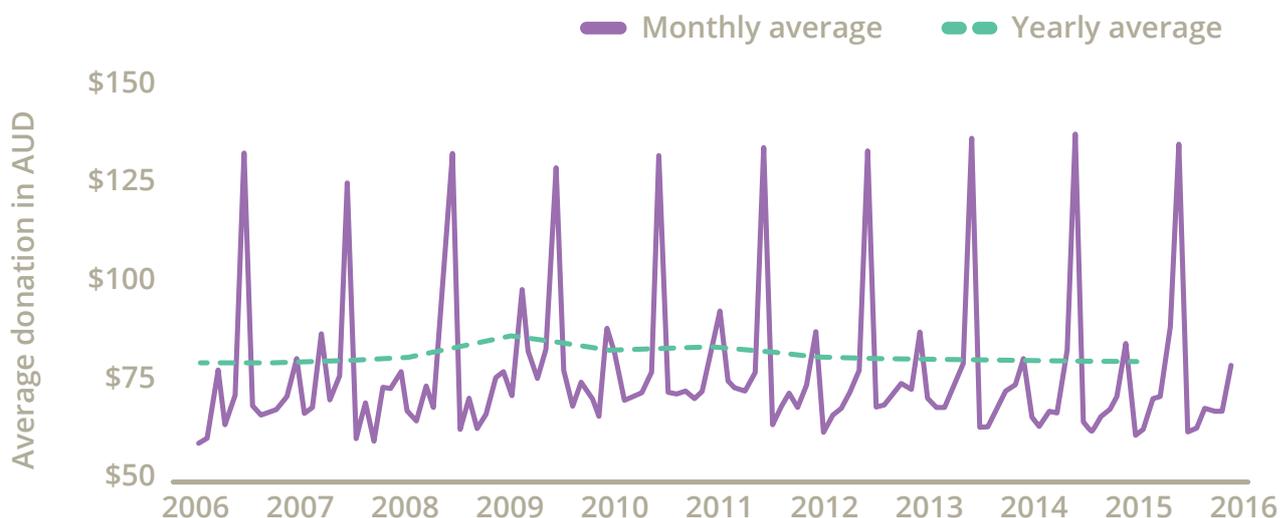
### INSIGHT

**Regular donations through GiveNow are repeated, on average, 17.5 times, and the median total value of a regular donation over its lifespan is \$350. Organisations could use these numbers to improve income forecasts and to compare their performance to the sector's performance.**

## HOW HAS THE AVERAGE DONATION CHANGED OVER TIME?

The short answer: it hasn't, much.

Since 2006, GiveNow has processed enough donations to calculate a fairly accurate estimate of the average donation. The yearly trend is shown in Figure 7. Only donations of \$1,000 and under (98% of all donations) are considered, to reduce the impact of outliers. The yearly averages, up to 2015, are plotted on January 1 and connected by the dashed green line.



**Figure 7: Average donation per month and per year, for donations \$1,000 and under**

The monthly average donation is subject to strong seasonality, with a large peak in June and a small peak in December. The end of the financial year and the holiday season, respectively, tend to attract higher donations (and more one-off donations, as shown in [Figure 3](#) on page 25).

The yearly average shows little to no trend, indicating that the average donation on GiveNow is not changing over the long term. The 2009 increase can be attributed to the 2009 Victorian bushfire appeal, which received the highest average donation of all causes (with at least 100 donations) in the last 15 years.

## HOW DO DONATIONS VARY BY MONTH?

Any organisation that doesn't spruik hard for end-of-financial-year donations is doing itself a disservice, because June is the most lucrative month on GiveNow.

In Figure 8, donations are averaged over the years 2006–2015 for every month, to obtain an average donation per month.

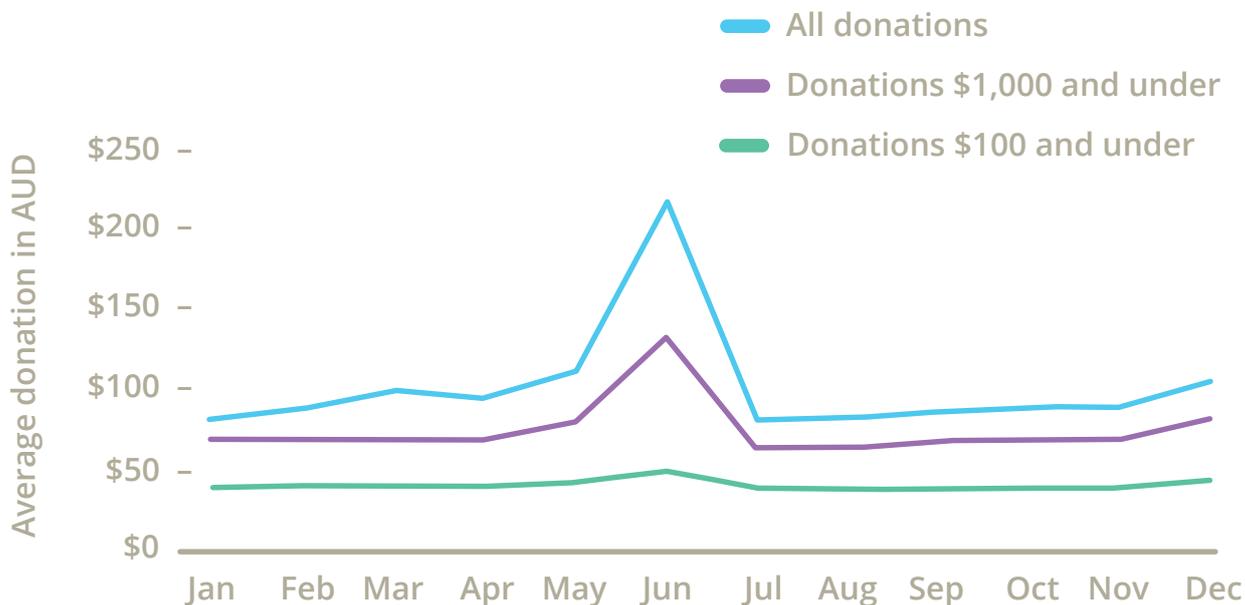


Figure 8: Average donation per month

The June and December peaks first shown in [Figure 7](#) (page 25) are clearly visible. July sees the lowest average donation, following the end of the tax year. The same conclusions hold true for small donations considered in isolation, as shown in [Figure 8](#), above, and in [Table 3](#), below.

	Overall average for 2006 - 2015	June average	July average
All donations	\$111	\$217	\$83
Donations \$1,000 and under	\$81	\$133	\$65
Donations \$100 and under	\$42	\$50	\$40

Table 3: Average donation per month

For all donations, the June average is more than double the overall monthly average. For donations of \$1,000 and under the June average is 70% higher than the overall average, and for donations of \$100 and under, the difference is a small but significant 18%. In all donation size-brackets, July sees the lowest average donations.

## INSIGHT

**June sees the highest average donation, not just because this month traditionally sees more \$1,000-plus donations, but also because the average of all small donations (\$100 and under) is slightly higher. In other words, even donors who give small amounts tend to give a little more in June. This highlights the need for organisations to ensure they have an end of financial year campaign in place.**

The average number of donations per month, not shown here, follows the same trend as the average donation value per month, with the largest donation volume occurring in June and December, and the lowest volume in July.

## WHICH DAY OF THE WEEK IS THE MOST LUCRATIVE FOR ORGANISATIONS?

What is it about Sundays? For most people it's not payday or pension day, yet it's a good day for GiveNow causes.

We aggregated one-off donations made since 2001 by days of the week and averaged them to arrive at the results shown in Figure 9.

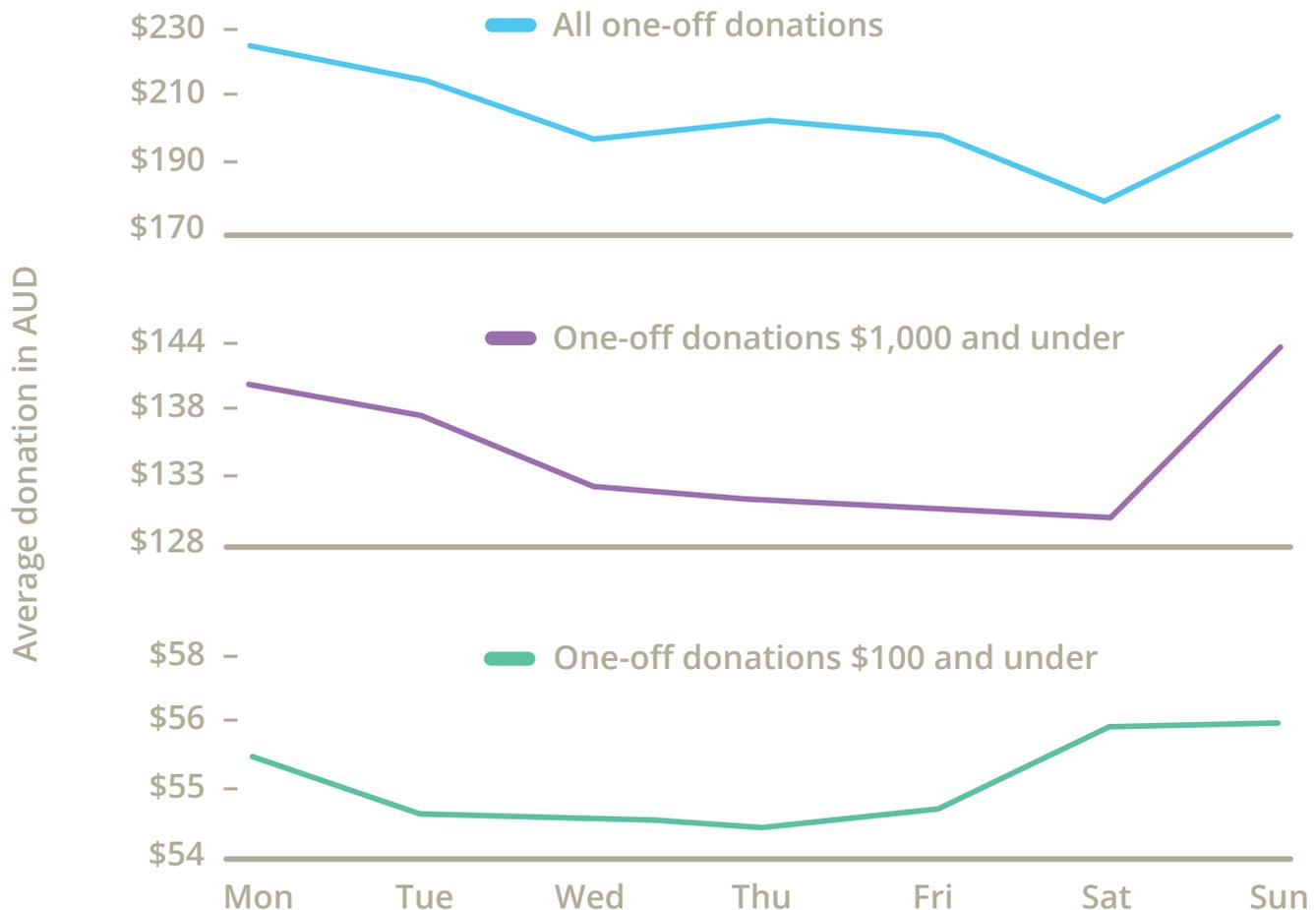


Figure 9: Average value of one-off donations by days of the week

Mondays see the highest average donation overall (\$224), and Saturdays see the lowest (\$179). However, GiveNow's biggest ever recorded donation of \$200,000 was made on a Monday, and this skews the numbers. To reduce the effect of this and other outliers, the bottom two graphs in Figure 9 consider only sub-\$100 and sub-\$1,000 donations.

When we look at donations \$1,000 and under, the most lucrative day switches to Sunday (average donation \$143), and Saturday retains its bottom spot; it's the least lucrative day (average \$130).

Interestingly, for small donations (\$100 and under), the pattern changes and both Saturday and Sunday have a high average, although the difference with weekdays is only about \$1.

## WHAT IS THE MOST POPULAR DAY OF THE WEEK FOR GIVING?

Is this the payday effect? Thursday sees more one-off donations (17%) than any other day of the week.

Figure 10 shows the percentage of all one-off donations per day of the week for the period March 10, 2001 to August 22, 2016.

We've considered only one-off donations, not regular donations, because regular donations are charged automatically and therefore tell us less about user behavior.

Saturday sees the fewest donations. The overall trend seems to suggest a slight increase in the average number of donations from Monday to Thursday, followed by a large decrease going into the weekend.

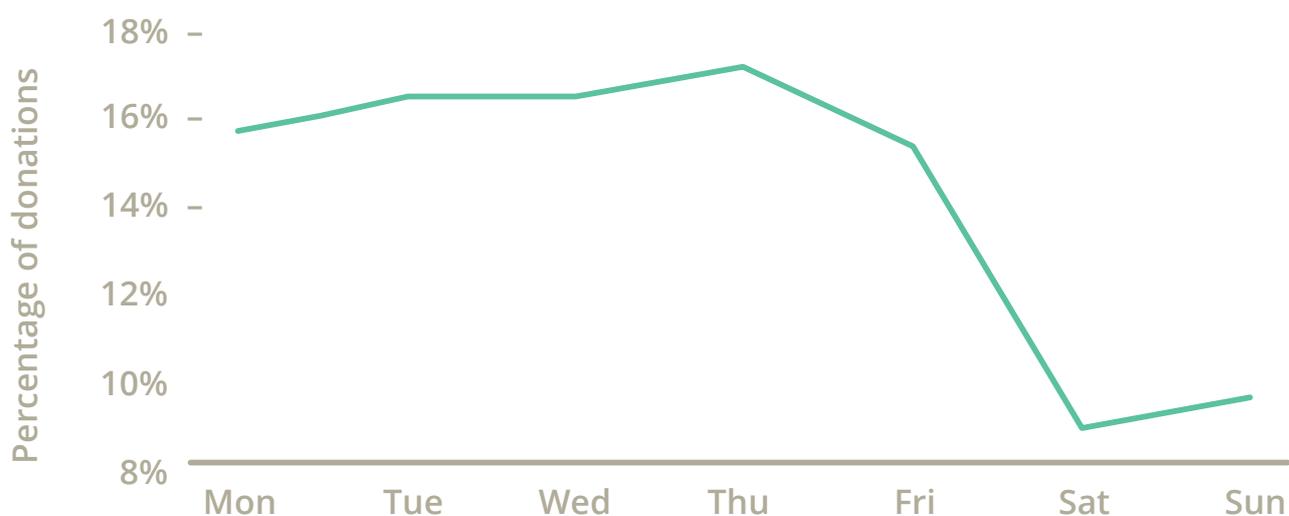


Figure 10: Number of one-off donations per day of the week, as percentage

### INSIGHT

**GiveNow donors use the platform most often throughout the week and least often on Saturdays. Thursday sees the most donations, but Monday sees the highest average value donations (\$224). If we consider only small donations (\$100 and under), then weekends attract the highest average value gifts.**

## DONATIONS HOUR BY HOUR: VOLUME AND VALUE

In terms of volume, the highest percentage of donations occurs at 11am and the average stays relatively high until a decrease sets in at 4pm. The percentage picks up again at 9pm, but the overall number of donations after dinner is lower than during the day. As you'd expect, very few people make donations between midnight and 7am. As a result, the average donation during these hours is statistically unreliable.

In terms of value, the sweet spot is 3pm. The trend line shows a build throughout most of the morning, and a slight decrease after lunch, but then mid-afternoon is when the big-spenders come out: the average value peaks at 3pm at \$142. The trend shows a strong decrease between 3pm and 7pm.

Figure 11 shows the per-hour percentage of donations and the averaged value of all one-off donations of \$1,000 and under between January 1, 2006 and August 22, 2016. The blue line corresponds to the vertical axis on the left and the green line corresponds to the vertical axis on the right.

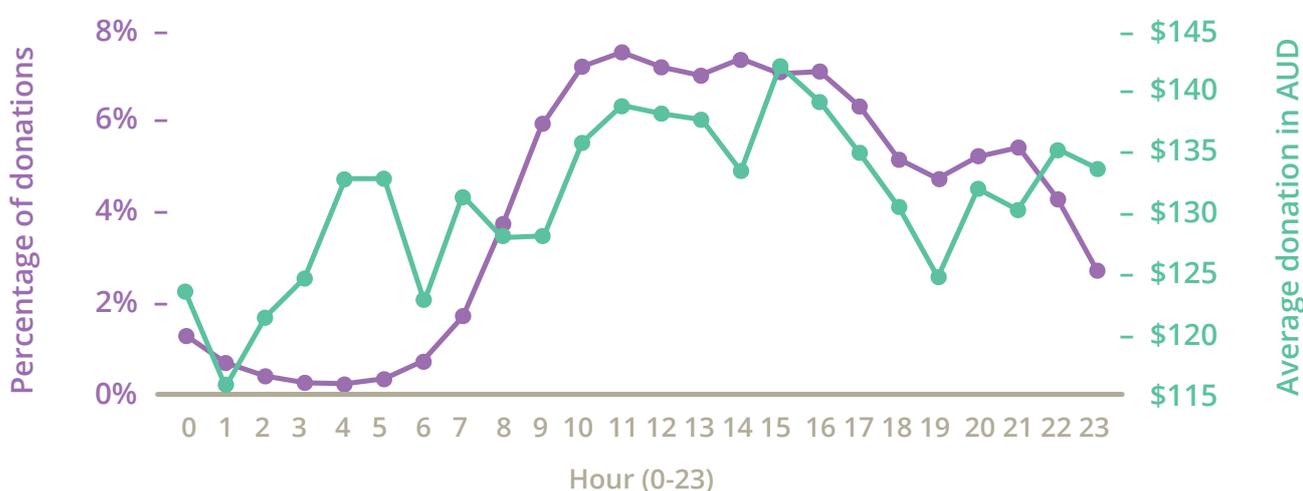


Figure 11: One-off donations of \$1,000 and under, per hour

### INSIGHT

**The highest volume of donations through GiveNow occurs during the day, between 11am and 4pm, with the highest average value donation occurring at 3pm. So if your organisation is planning an online campaign, consider launching it at lunchtime early in the week.**

## DONATIONS PER HOUR FOR EACH HOUR OF THE WEEK

We've already seen from Figure 10 (page 33) that there are clear differences in the volume of donations depending on the day of the week. To display how these differences are reflected in the hourly averages, Figure 12 shows the percentage of one-off donations of \$1,000 and under, per hour of the day, split out by the day of the week. Every dot in the graph represents the percentage of the total number of donations received for the corresponding hour and day of the week.

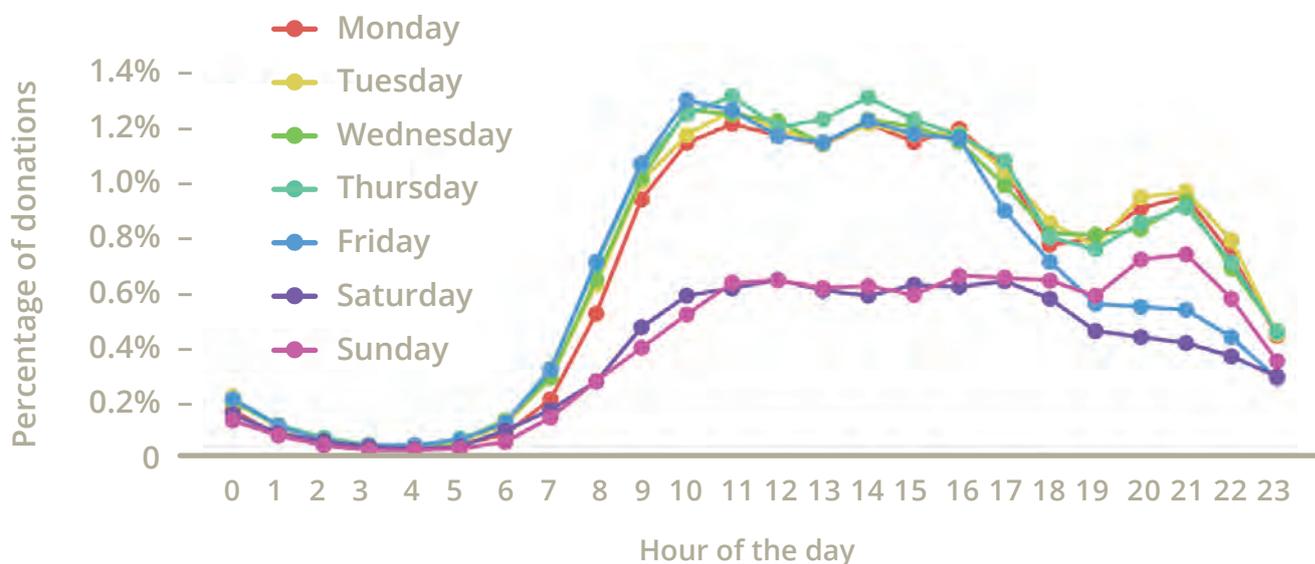


Figure 12: Percentage of one-off donations made in every hour of the week

The lower number of donations on the weekend is clearly visible. The average picks up slightly on Sunday night, while Friday night and Saturday night are below average compared to the rest of the day. Monday to Thursday all follow the same trend as each other, with a small dip after lunch and a decrease between 4pm and 7pm.

### INSIGHT

**As you might expect, Friday and Saturday evenings are very quiet at GiveNow – but Sunday evening is busier than any other time of the weekend.**

# CAUSES

## OVERVIEW

How many donations does it take to change a lightbulb into a chandelier?

We wanted to know how many donations a cause might expect to attract, on average, and how much it might expect to raise in total, on average.

We looked at all the causes that attracted at least one donation, and plotted the total amount raised for each cause against the number of donations to that cause.

In Figure 13, the total amount raised is plotted against the number of donations, for each cause with at least one donation. The axes follow a logarithmic scale, in order to capture the full range of observations in a single figure.

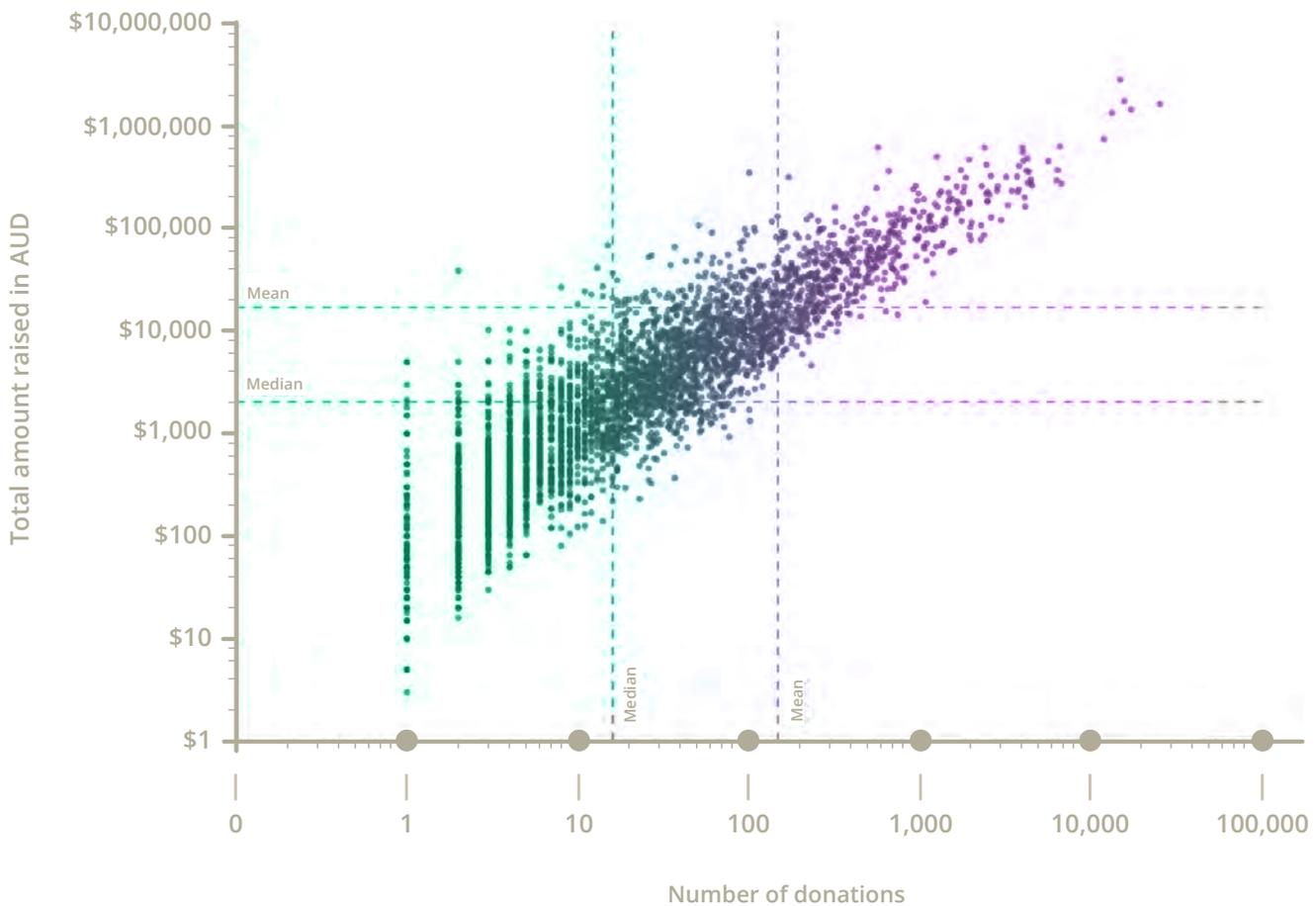


Figure 13: Total amount raised per cause and number of donations to that cause

The “average” cause attracted almost 150 donations and raised just over \$17,000.

However, the graphs shows a very wide range of observations, ranging from causes with a single donation of a few dollars each, to one cause that attracted 25,573 donations and raised \$2,836,167.

This wide range of observations means there is a large difference between the mean and the median:

	Mean	Median
Total number of donations	149	16
Total amount raised	\$17,072	\$2,045

Table 4: Mean and median donations per cause

## INSIGHT

**The number of donations and the total value of donations a cause attracts is highly dependent on the type of organisation, the sector and geographical area in which it operates, and the demographics of the donors attracted to that particular cause.**

**You can use the numbers shown in Figure 13 to compare your cause’s performance to the performance of the sector overall, but you shouldn’t use them to set budgets or fundraising targets.**

In other words, there’s really no such thing as “average” when it comes to how much money an organisation can expect to raise, or how many donations it can expect to attract. The best answer to “What’s average?” is “It depends.” Interest areas, discussed in the next section, provide some insights into distinguishing between different types of causes and the donors they attract.

# INTEREST AREAS

## OVERVIEW

Every organisation that lists a cause on GiveNow selects an “interest area” for their cause from a pre-defined list. [Figure 14](#) displays all these interest areas and shows the total amount donated, the number of donations and the average donation for each interest area.

One of the interest areas organisations can select is “unknown”; about 14% of causes are categorised in this way.

To minimise the impact of outliers, only donations of \$1,000 and under are considered in the comparison of average donations on the right-hand side.

## INSIGHT

**Different interest areas attract different donor demographics. For example, animal welfare causes receive many, but low-value, donations, while arts and culture causes receive relatively few donations, but they're big ones.**

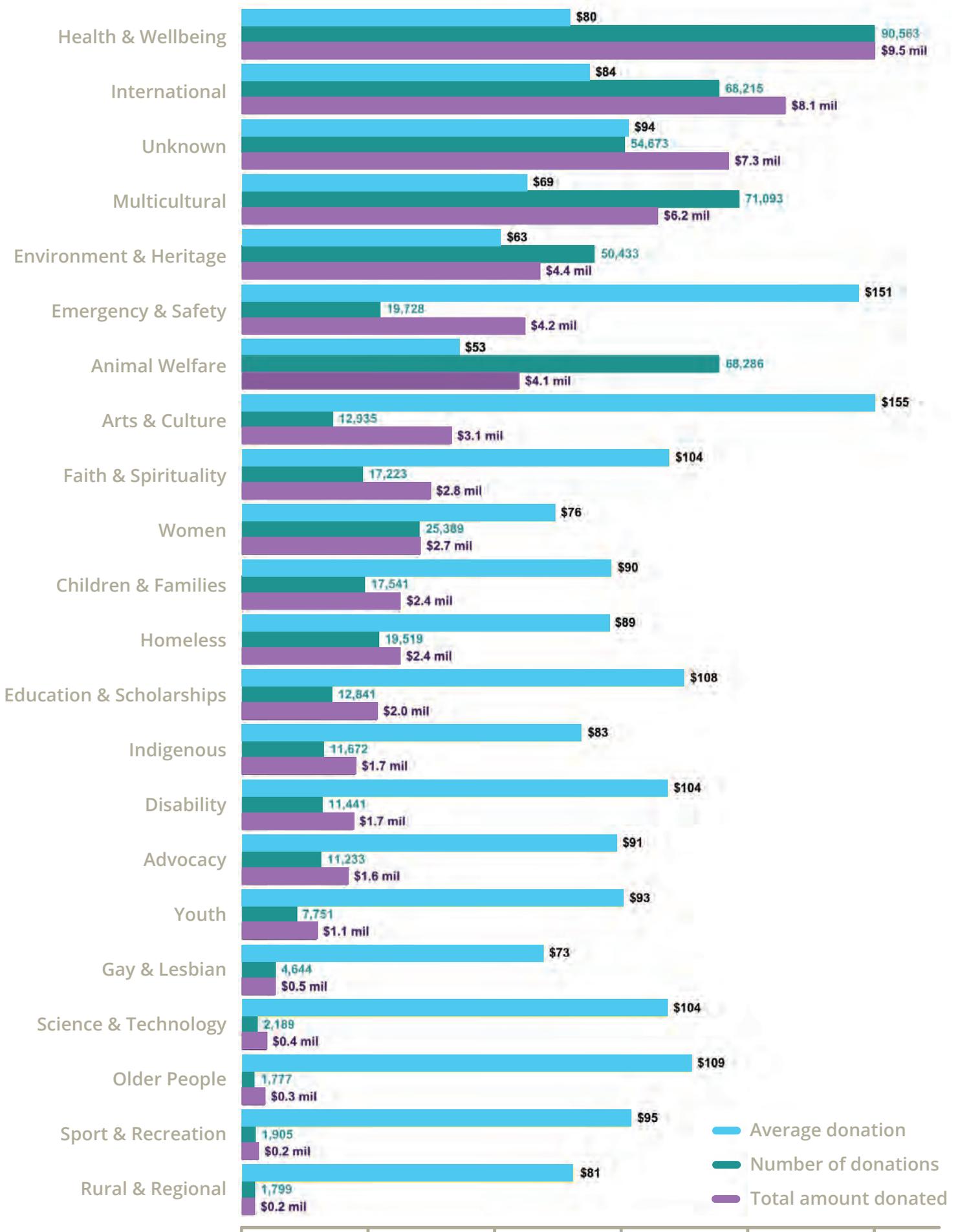


Figure 14: Donations by interest area

## WHICH INTEREST AREAS ATTRACT THE MOST MONEY?

Health and wellbeing causes attracted the highest total donations: \$9,465,332 all up for a range of physical and mental health purposes. “International” is another popular interest area, drawing in \$8,122,539 for various aid and development causes overseas, such as the 2015 earthquake in Nepal and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Comparing total donations for each interest area with the number of donations and the average donation highlights a number of differences.

Animal welfare causes receive a lot of donations, yet the average donation is the smallest of any category (\$53). In contrast, emergency and safety causes receive relatively few donations, but they’re high-value: the donation average (\$151) is the second highest in the list. Arts and culture causes follow the same pattern as emergency and safety causes, receiving not many donations, but the most generous ones of all, on average (\$155).

## DOES THE POPULARITY OF INTEREST AREAS CHANGE OVER TIME?

When it comes to donating to particular interest areas, how fickle are Australians? Are we loyal to the causes we’re most passionate about, or do we respond to changing needs?

To shed some light on this, we analysed changes in donations to the five most popular interest areas over time, from 2006 to 2015 (those that drew the highest number of donations). Figure 15 shows the results as a percentage of all donations to those five areas.

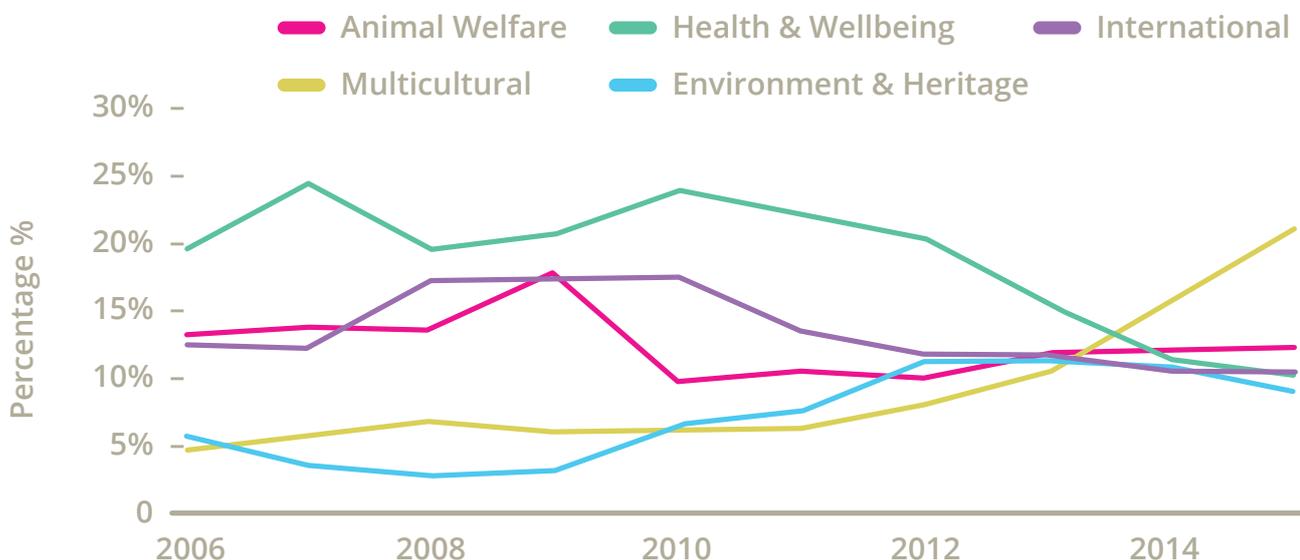


Figure 15: Annual donations to the five most popular interest areas, as a percentage of all donations to those areas.

Health and wellbeing causes attracted the most donations until 2013, but in recent years multicultural causes have overtaken them to become the leading interest area, with donations increasing from 6.4% in 2011 to 21.1% in 2015. This can be attributed to the increasing popularity of causes related to asylum seekers and refugees.

The 2009 spike in donations to animal welfare causes is connected to the Black Saturday bushfires, in which several wildlife shelters were destroyed and it was estimated that more than one million animals perished.

Environment and heritage causes have become slightly more popular, while the share of donations going to international causes has decreased since 2010.

Whether these changes represent changing societal attitudes, changing circumstances, fluctuations in the popularity of GiveNow with organisations working in corresponding interest areas, or a combination of all these factors requires further investigation.

## INSIGHT

**The popularity of particular interest areas is subject to change, often reflecting the broader social commentary.**

**Build your fundraising strategy in light of your understanding of your particular donor base, and in light of what's going on in society more broadly.**

—

<sup>2</sup> These conclusions may be extrapolated to Australia as a whole only if it is assumed that GiveNow represents Australian causes in microcosm.

# GENDER

We analysed GiveNow data in gender terms in search of insights that organisations could apply to their marketing efforts. When users donate through GiveNow, they select from a drop-down list a prefix (e.g. Ms, Mr) that can be used to identify them as male or female. (GiveNow has only recently added Mx as a non-binary gender option.)

Of the 582,851 donations, we identified 315,497 (54.1%) as coming from female donors, and 213,656 (36.7%) as coming from male donors. The donor gender for the remaining 53,698 donations (9.2%) was not specified. The following analysis excludes those 9.2% of donations.

## OVERVIEW

Figure 16 shows the number of donations by female and male donors, and the average value of those donations. The left vertical axis and blue bars correspond to the number of donations, and the right vertical axis and green bars correspond to the average donation.

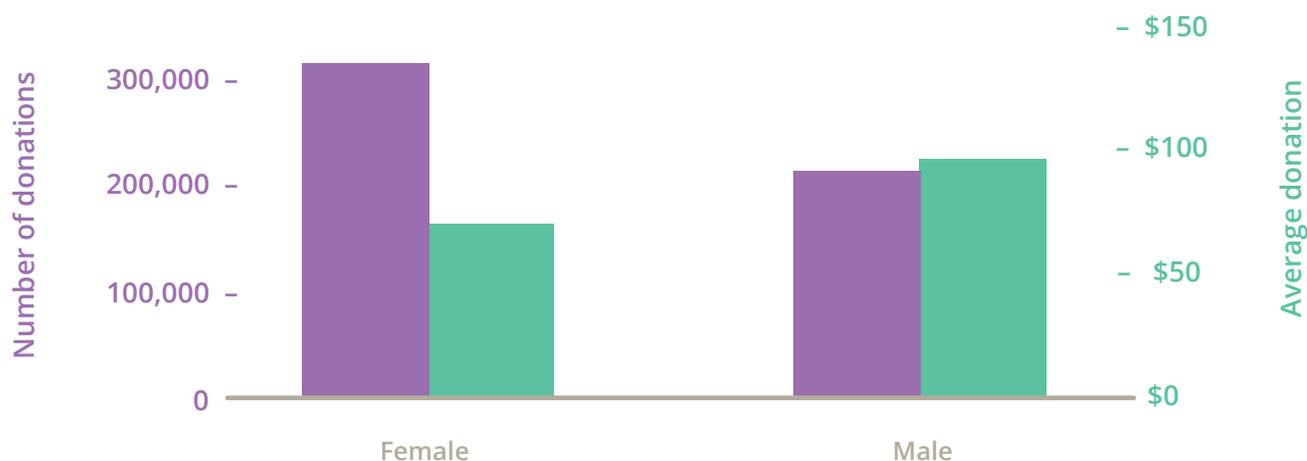


Figure 16: Number and average value of donations, by gender

Women clearly make more donations through GiveNow, but men donate slightly higher amounts on average, as indicated by the green bars. Men donate \$96 on average, compared to \$70 for women. As a result, the total amount donated by men is slightly higher: \$29.6 million from men compared to \$28.1 million from women.

Men are more likely than women to donate an amount greater than \$1,000. If we consider only donations of \$1,000 and under, then total donations by women (\$21.9 million) are higher than total donations by men (\$20.2 million).

## INSIGHT

**Women make more donations, while men donate higher amounts. As a result, the total amounts donated by women and by men are approximately equal.**

### ONE-OFF VERSUS REGULAR DONATIONS: IS THERE A GENDER DIFFERENCE?

If we look at one-off donations, we find that men donate more in total than women, but if we look at regular donations, we find that women donate more in total than men. Figure 17 shows the details.

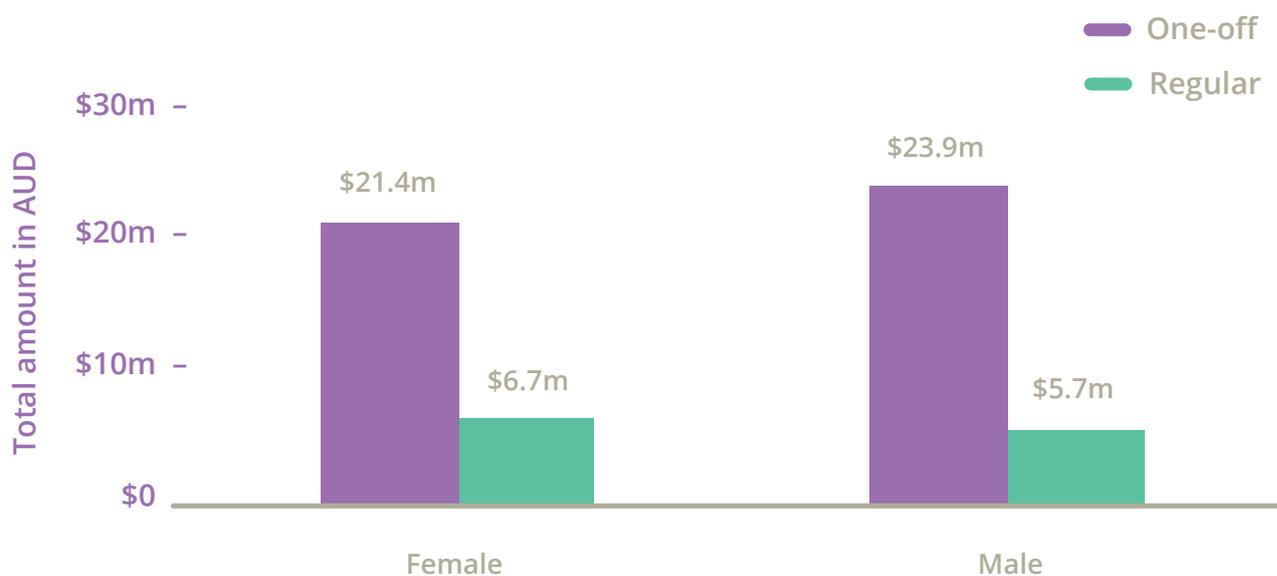


Figure 17: Total donations by gender and donation type

## INSIGHT

**If we look at one-off donations, we find that men donate more in total than women. If we look at regular donations, we find that women donate more than men. If your organisation seeks a more predictable income stream, and therefore seeks more regular donations, consider targeting women.**

### IS THE WAY MEN AND WOMEN DONATE CHANGING OVER TIME?

We wanted to find out whether there were gender differences in the popularity of one-off donations versus regular donations, and, if so, whether they were changing over time.

Figure 18 groups donations by gender and donation type, and shows the percentage of the total annual number of donations for each of the four combinations.

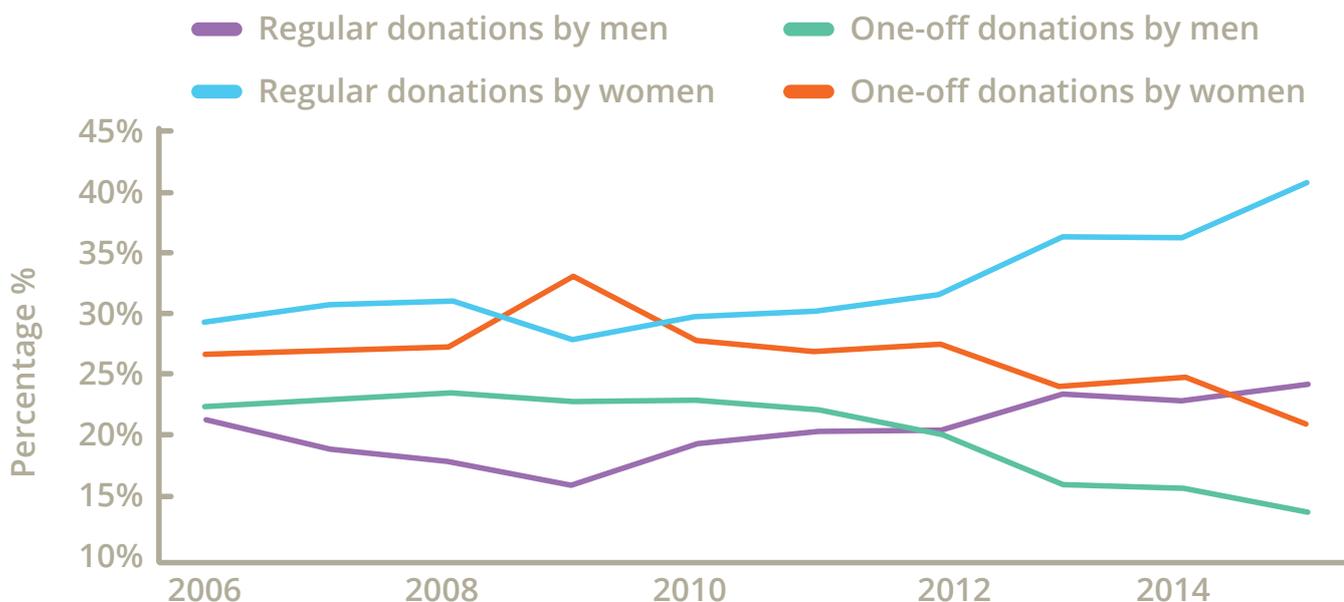


Figure 18: Annual donations by gender and donation type, as a percentage of all donations

For both men and women, regular giving is becoming more popular, and one-off donations are apparently losing their appeal.

For women, regular giving became more popular than one-off in 2010. For men, the change occurred three years later, in 2012. For both men and women, the gap between one-off and regular donations continues to widen.

Interestingly, the 2009 spike in donations that accompanied the Black Saturday bushfires is visible only in one-off donations by women (see [Figure 18](#)).

## INSIGHT

**Since 2012, regular giving has been more popular than one-off donations with both men and women. The gap between one-off and regular donations is widening, and there is little reason to believe that this trend will change. If you're campaigning to convert one-off donors into regular donors because you want a more predictable income stream, you're running with the tide.**

**Women make more one-off donations than men on GiveNow, especially during disasters. They also make more regular donations than men.**

## WHAT CAUSES APPEAL MOST STRONGLY TO WOMEN? TO MEN?

We wanted to find out which causes tend to attract women's donations, and which ones appeal the most to men. Figure 19 shows donations per interest area as percentages, divided according to gender.

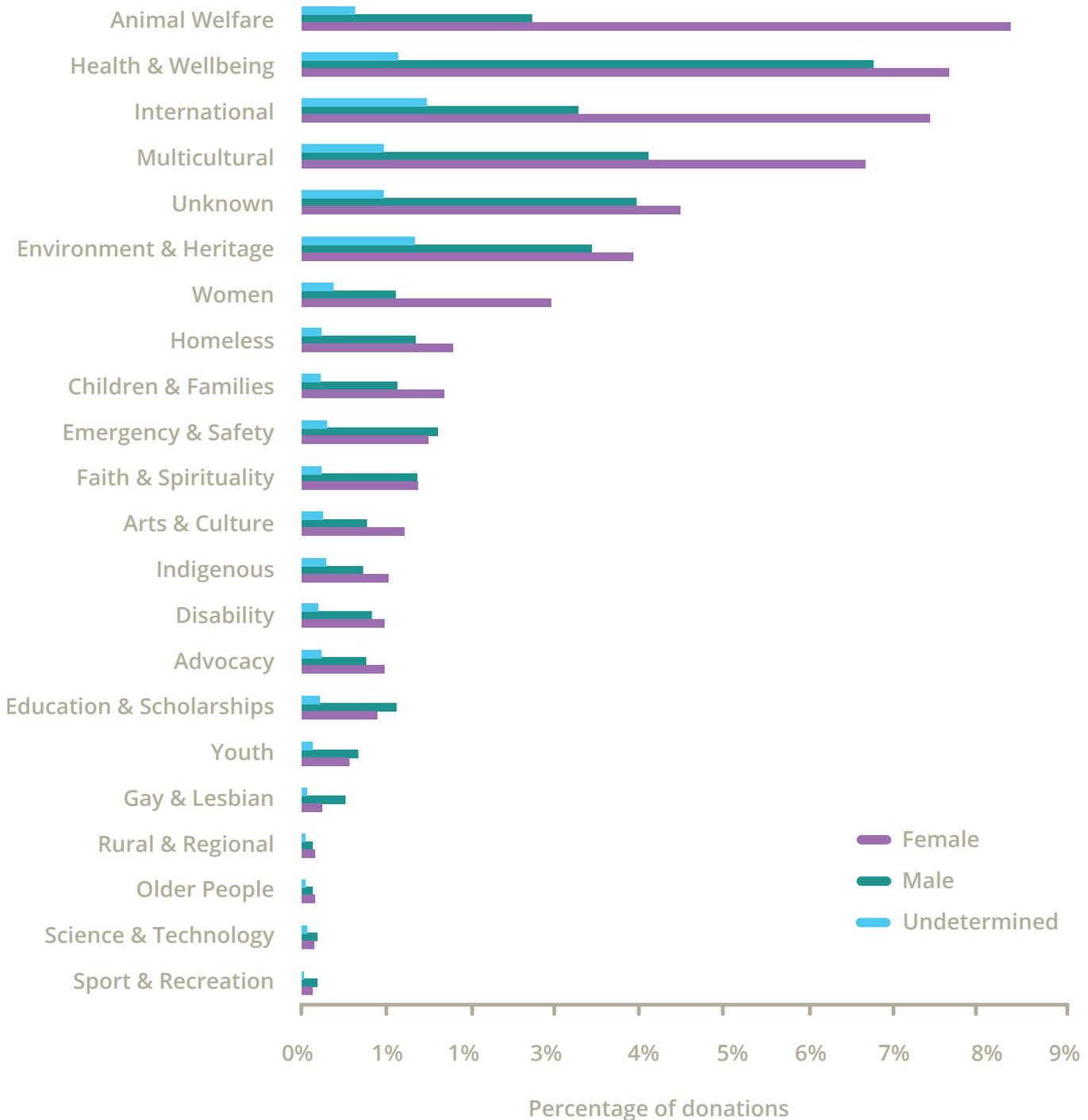


Figure 19: Percentage of donations per interest area, divided by gender

Animal welfare causes attracted more than three times as many donations from women as from men. The 2009 Black Saturday bushfires gave rise to a number of very popular wildlife causes on GiveNow, and this explains the 2009 spike in women's donations shown in [Figure 18](#) (page 44).

Multicultural, international and women's causes are clearly more popular among women than men.

Men's donations equaled or exceeded women's in a minority of interest areas: health and wellbeing, environment and heritage, emergency and safety, faith and spirituality, education and scholarships, youth, and gay and lesbian causes.

All these observations can be seen clearly in [Figure 19](#). However, the difference between women's and men's support for particular causes is even more acute. Recall from [Figure 16](#) that women make more donations than men. The ratio of women's donations to men's donations is approximately 3:2. If every interest area received a share of women's and men's donations in the corresponding proportions, then every purple bar would be 1.5 times larger than the corresponding green bar.

In short, women's support for certain causes (e.g. animal welfare, multicultural, international) is disproportionately strong, and men's support for certain causes (health and wellbeing, environment and heritage, emergency and safety) is disproportionately strong – even more so than [Figure 19](#) suggests.

## INSIGHT

**Most causes are much more popular with women than with men, or vice versa. Organisations can use this knowledge to their advantage when tailoring campaigns.**

# LOCATION

We wanted to find out about where GiveNow donors are concentrated, geographically; we wanted to look for correlations between where people live and how much they donate; and we were also interested in correlations between median incomes and amounts donated.

To do this, we drew not only on GiveNow data (postcodes and suburbs), but also on corresponding government data:

**Australian Taxation Office (ATO) statistics:** Mean and median taxable income per postcode, for tax years 2003–04 and 2013–14. [Source](#).

**PSMA administrative boundaries.** Latitudes and longitudes for administrative boundaries (suburbs) in Australia. [Source](#).

## OVERVIEW

We analysed the average GiveNow donation per postcode for the tax year 2013–14 and compared it to the median taxable income for each of those postcodes in 2013–14. To obtain reliable averages from GiveNow data, we considered only donations of \$1,000 and under, and only postcodes from which at least 50 donations were made. 484 postcodes satisfied these data requirements. Figure 20 shows the results. Every dot corresponds to a postcode.

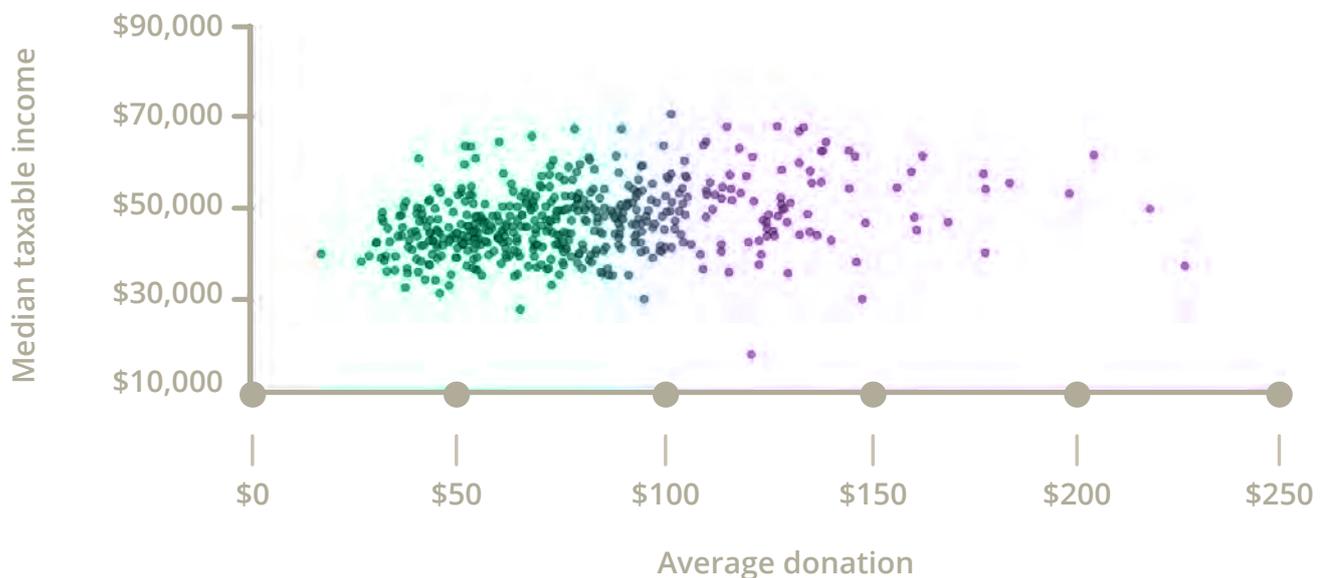


Figure 20: Average donation versus median taxable income by postcode

Perhaps surprisingly, the positive correlation between median income and average donation is barely visible, and there is a wide spread in median taxable income for all values of the average donation. In other words, while we might have assumed that people from wealthy postcodes would give more on average on GiveNow, and people from poorer postcodes would give less on average, this is not necessarily the case.

Postcodes on the bottom right of the plot could be considered the “most generous” on GiveNow and include:

Postcode	State	Includes	Median taxable income 2013–14	Average donation	No. of donations
4113	Qld	Eight Mile Plains, Runcorn	\$37,426	\$225	50
4067	Qld	St Lucia	\$40,250	\$177	76
4208	Qld	Ormea, Kingsholme	\$45,230	\$160	52
2126	NSW	Cherrybrook	\$46,932	\$168	116
2097	NSW	Collaroy	\$48,077	\$160	53
2125	NSW	West Pennant Hills	\$49,837	\$217	90

Table 5: Most generous postcodes on GiveNow

## INSIGHT

**Rich people don't necessarily give more, and poor people don't necessarily give less. There is no strong correlation between the likely income of donors and the average amount they donate via GiveNow.**

## WHAT ABOUT PER-CAPITA AVERAGES?

In [Table 5](#) (page 49), we calculated the average donation by dividing the total amount donated by the number of donations. This tells us something about the activity of the “average GiveNow user” in a particular area.

But another way to think about “average” donations is to divide the total amount donated by the population size. This sheds some light on the GiveNow activity of the “average resident” of a particular area.

To calculate the per-capita average donation amount, we used data from the 2011 Census suburb population count. We considered only donations of \$1,000 and under made during 2011, and we considered only suburbs that made 50 or more donations. Table 6 shows the top 10 suburbs sorted by the per-capita average donation value:

	Total donation value	Total number of donations	2011 Population	Per capita average number of donations	Per capita average value of donations
Sydney NSW	\$44,588	437	14,307	0.031	\$3.12
East Melbourne, Vic	\$14,350	65	4,714	0.014	\$3.04
Albert Park, Vic	\$11,856	108	5,954	0.018	\$1.99
North Sydney, NSW	\$11,140	80	6,529	0.013	\$1.78
Fitzroy, Vic	\$15,822	139	9,433	0.015	\$1.68
Melbourne, Vic	\$47,408	337	28,372	0.012	\$1.67
Caulfield, Vic	\$8,463	71	5,160	0.014	\$1.64
Broome, WA	\$6,840	69	4,291	0.016	\$1.59
South Melbourne, Vic	\$14,662	91	9,318	0.010	\$1.57
Middle Park, Vic	\$6,159	83	4,057	0.020	\$1.52

Table 6: Top 10 suburbs by per-capita average donation value

Sydney (NSW) and East Melbourne (Vic) have the highest per-capita average donation value, donating just over \$3 per inhabitant. Sydney also ranks highest for the average number of donations per capita. One possible explanation for Sydney's place at the top of the table is that GiveNow users might be registering their workplace address, rather than their home address, among their contact details. A similar scenario could apply to Melbourne.

East Melbourne, Albert Park (Vic) and Middle Park (Vic) are high-income areas, with median 2013–14 incomes of \$59,384 for East Melbourne and \$61,289 for Albert Park and Middle Park.

The residents of Fitzroy (Vic), Caulfield (Vic) and Broome (WA) have lower median incomes but appear high in the ranking and could therefore be considered as “more generous” GiveNow donors.

## WHERE IN AUSTRALIA IS GIVENOW USED THE MOST?

Figure 21 shows a heatmap of donor activity on GiveNow in Australia.

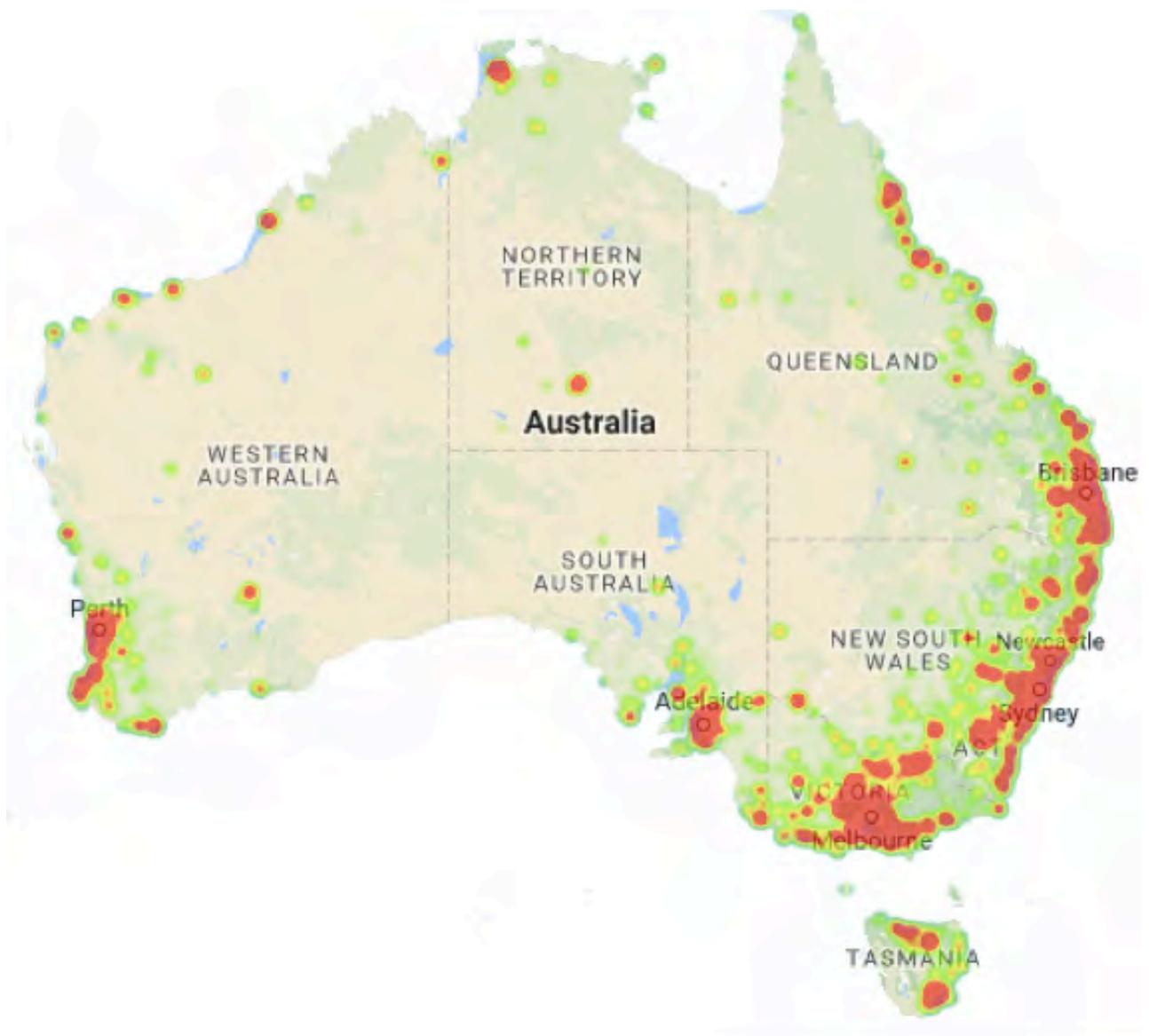


Figure 21: “Heatmap” of GiveNow donations by donor postcode

Donor activity levels are highest in the population-dense regions of the east coast, as expected.

To make the analysis more interactive, we plotted the number of donations per suburb as a percentage of all donations in the relevant state or territory. Red areas correspond to “busy” suburbs (a high proportion of donations for that state or territory), while blue areas represent low levels of donor activity.

For an interactive map with more detail for each city, click on the figures below.

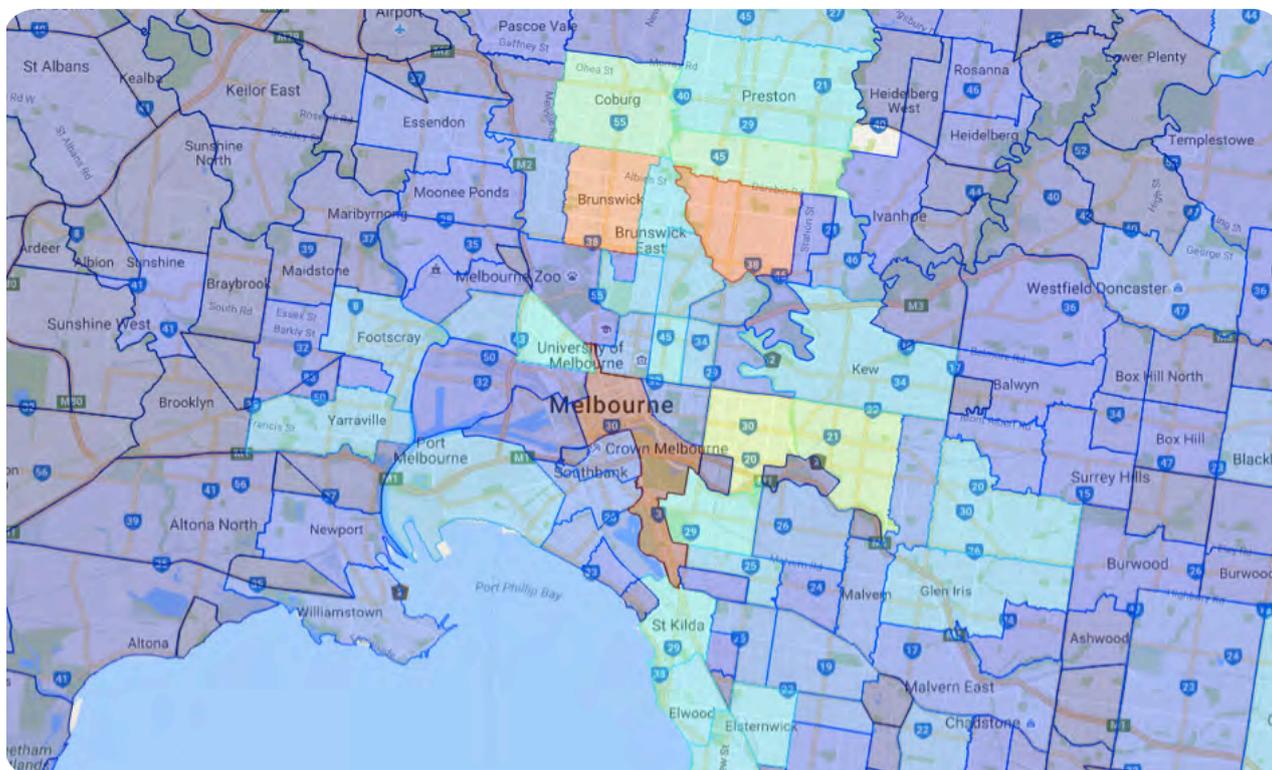


Figure 22: Melbourne heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total

	Percentage of the total number of donations statewide	Average donation for donations \$1,000 and under
Melbourne	2.67 %	\$115
Northcote	2.24 %	\$73
Brunswick	2.16 %	\$72
Richmond	1.50 %	\$89
Hawthorn	1.37 %	\$96

Table 7: Top five Vic suburbs by percentage of donations in the state

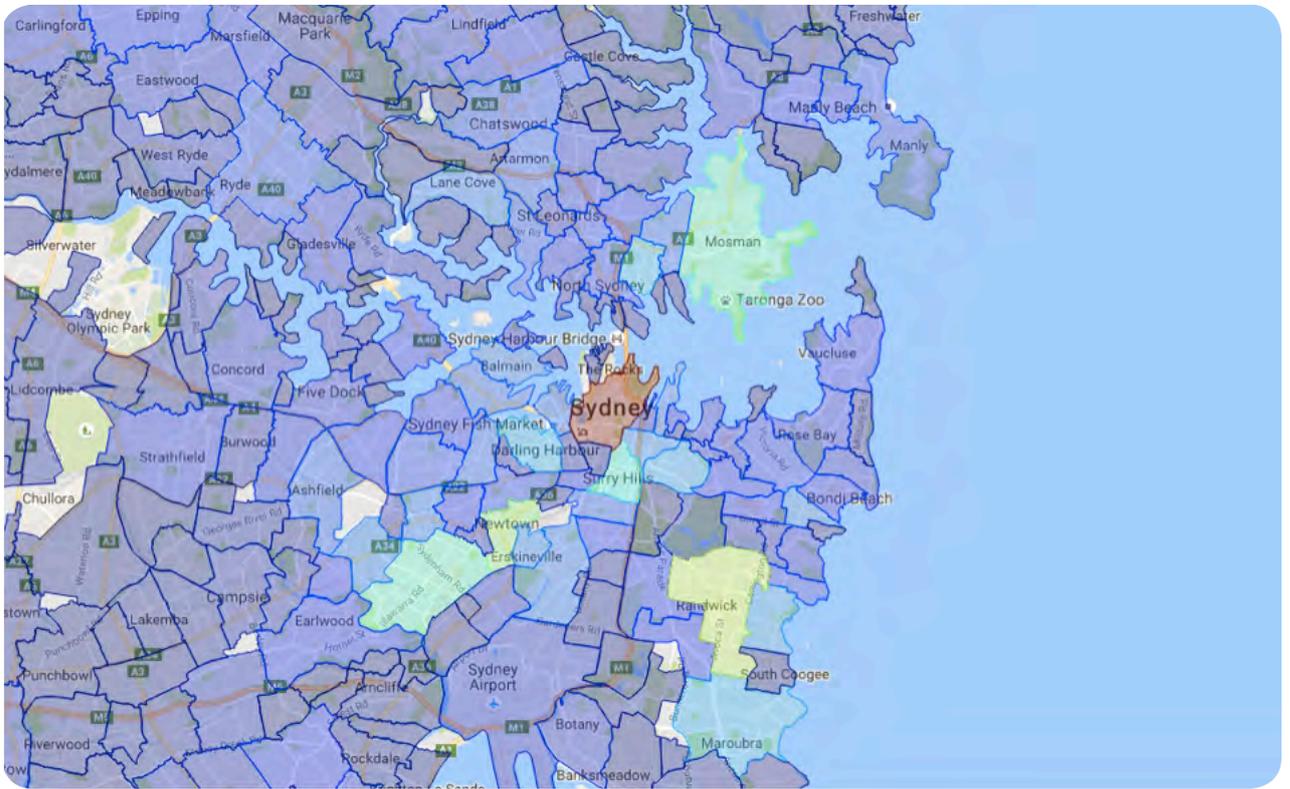


Figure 23: Sydney heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total

	Percentage of the total number of donations statewide	Average donation for donations \$1,000 and under
Sydney	2.79 %	\$118
Randwick	1.56 %	\$80
Newtown	1.39 %	\$78
Marrickville	1.16 %	\$77
Mosman	1.14 %	\$137

Table 8: Top five NSW suburbs by percentage of donations in the state

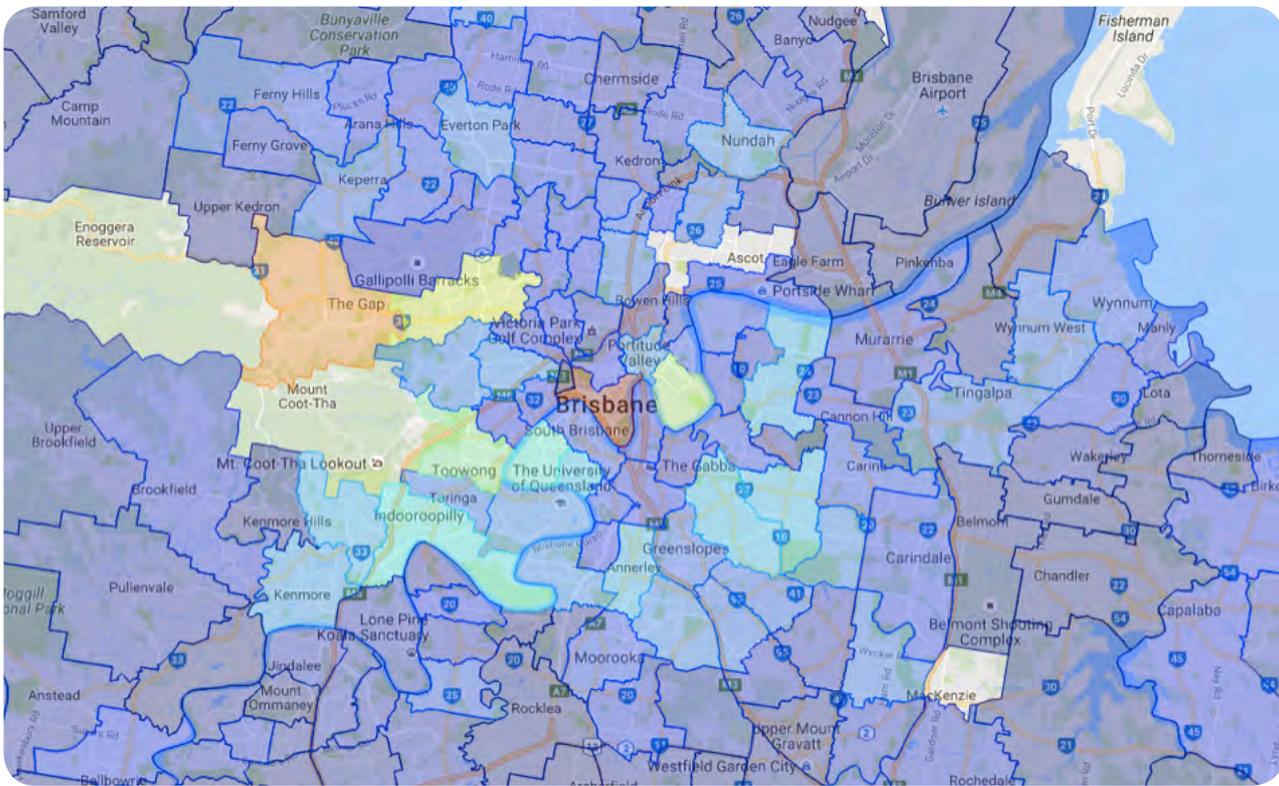


Figure 24: Brisbane heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total

	Percentage of the total number of donations statewide	Average donation for donations \$1,000 and under
Brisbane	2.44 %	\$135
The Gap	1.87 %	\$71
Ashgrove	1.46 %	\$69
New Farm	1.30 %	\$70
Toowoomba	1.22 %	\$77

Table 9: Top five Qld suburbs and cities by percentage of donations in the state

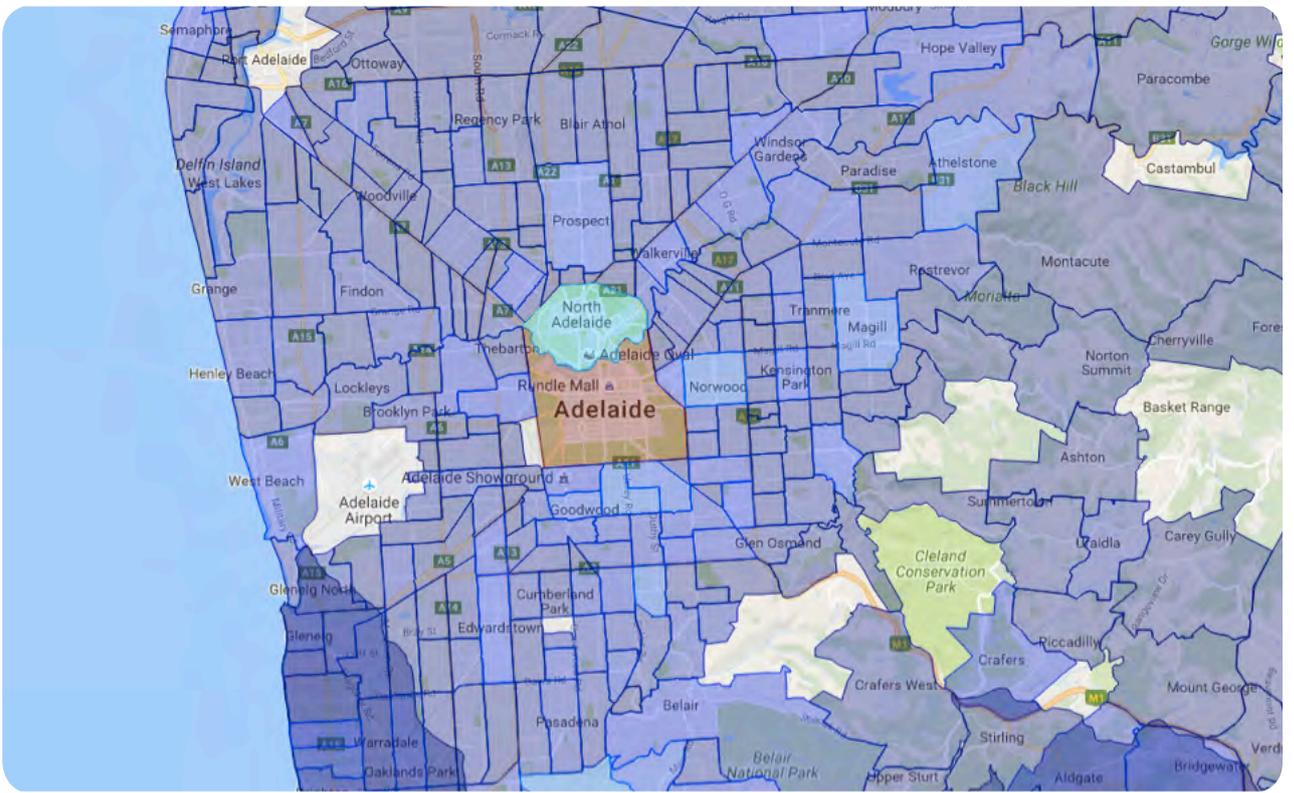


Figure 25: Adelaide heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total

	Percentage of the total number of donations statewide	Average donation for donations \$1,000 and under
Adelaide	5.48 %	\$92
North Adelaide	1.72 %	\$85
Mount Gambier	1.33 %	\$65
Eden Hills	1.30 %	\$51
Hallett Cove	1.21 %	\$41

Table 10: Top five SA suburbs and cities by percentage of donations in the state

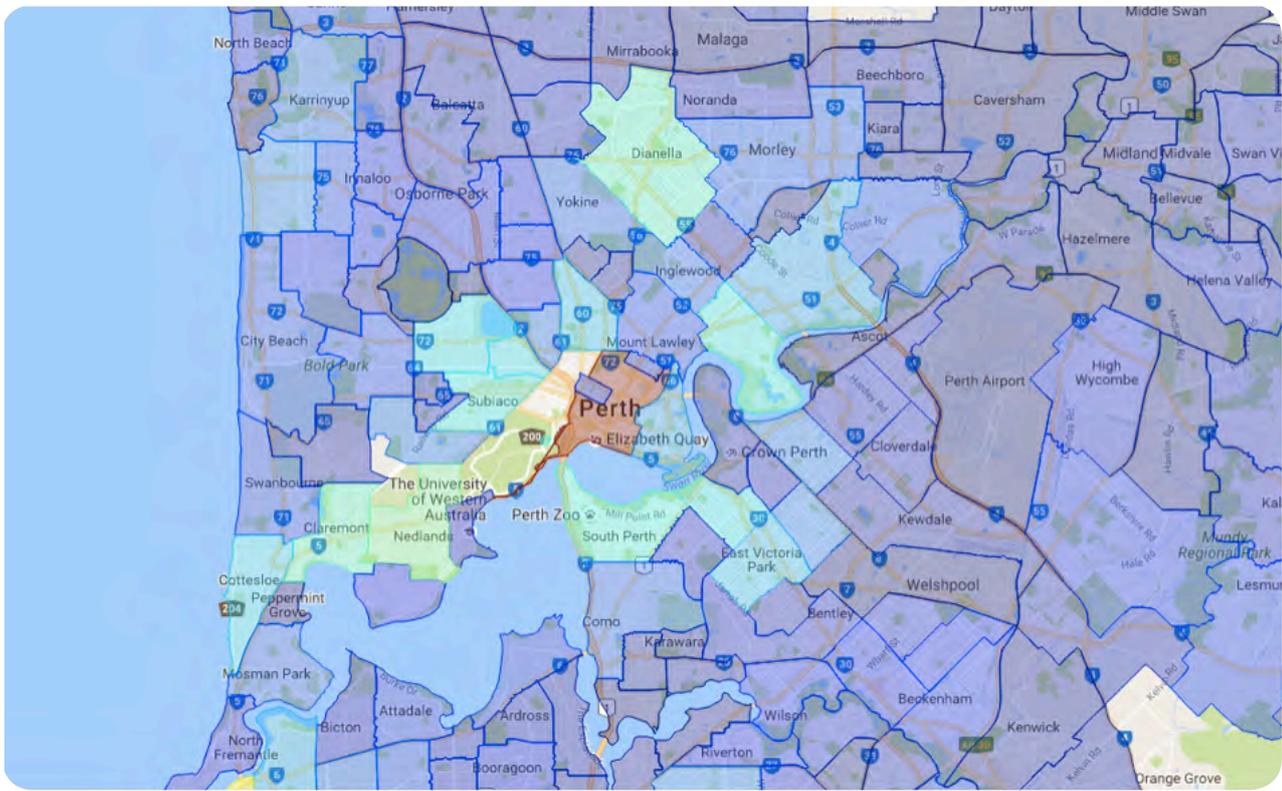


Figure 26: Perth heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total

	Percentage of the total number of donations statewide	Average donation for donations \$1,000 and under
Perth	3.19 %	\$109
Fremantle	2.02 %	\$77
Nedlands	1.49 %	\$113
Broome	1.41 %	\$132
Claremont	1.32 %	\$98

Table 11: Top five WA suburbs and towns by percentage of donations in the state

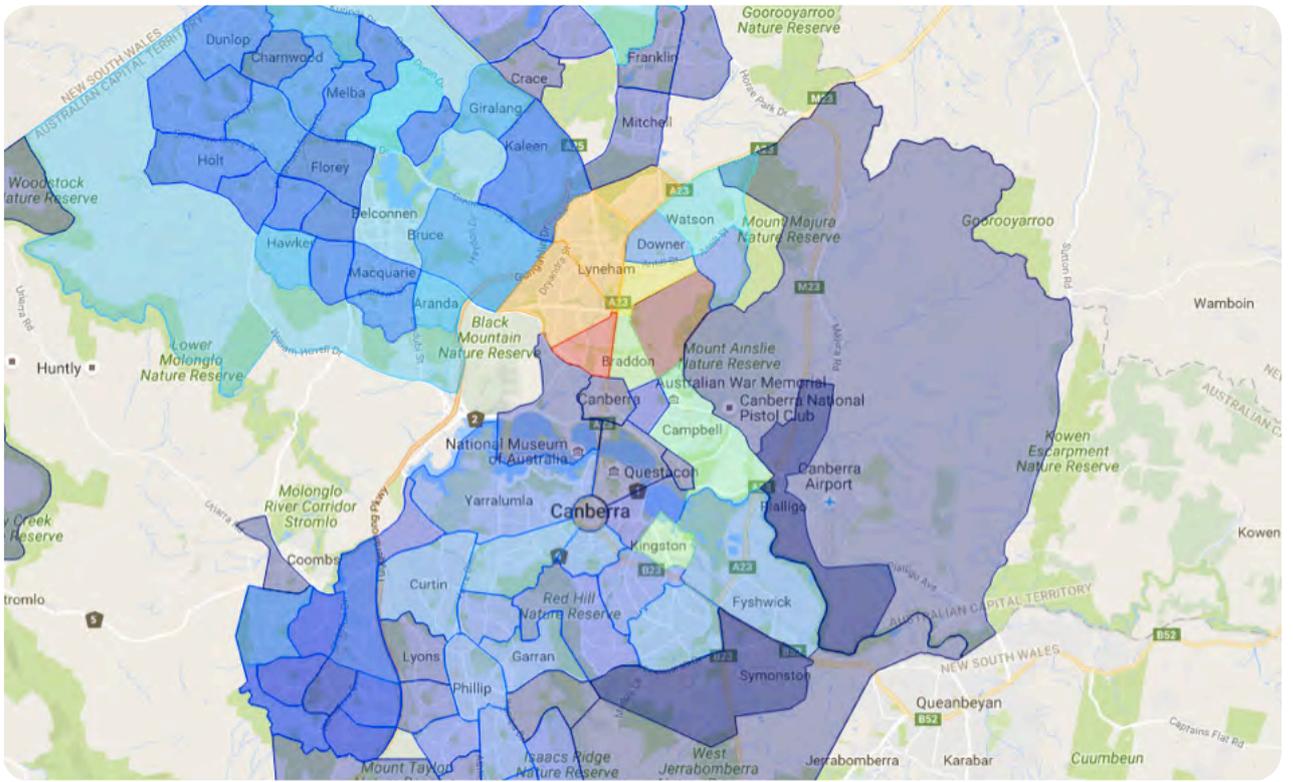


Figure 27: Canberra heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total

	Percentage of the total number of donations statewide	Average donation for donations \$1,000 and under
Ainslie	4.78 %	\$59
Turner	4.29 %	\$53
O'Connor	3.51 %	\$88
Lyneham	3.46 %	\$59
Dickson	3.02 %	\$51

Table 12: Top five ACT suburbs by percentage of donations in the territory

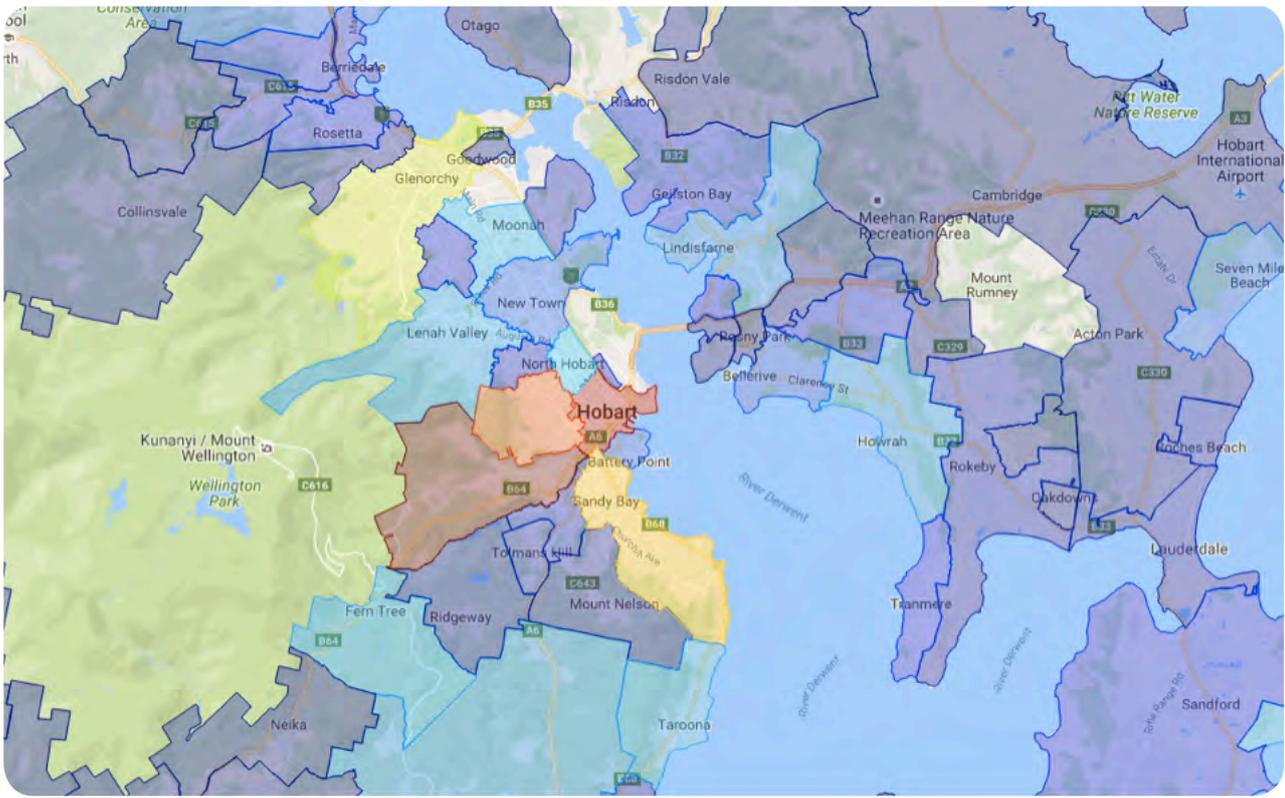


Figure 28: Hobart heatmap: number of donations as a percentage of state total

	Percentage of the total number of donations statewide	Average donation for donations \$1,000 and under
--	---	--

South Hobart	6.12 %	\$63
Hobart	5.78 %	\$82
West Hobart	5.03 %	\$67
Sandy Bay	4.23 %	\$96
Glenorchy	3.74 %	\$52

Table 13: Top five Tas suburbs by percentage of donations in the state

Northern Territory has been left out due to insufficient data.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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### Data Scientist

Joost joined Our Community in 2016 as the company's first data scientist. He holds Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Applied Mathematics from the Delft University of Technology in The Netherlands and is currently working towards a PhD in Engineering at the University of Melbourne. An active and passionate member of the data science community in Melbourne, Joost leads the organisation of the yearly Melbourne Datathon. He has a keen interest in applying his data science skills to solving real world problems and contributing to society in a meaningful way.

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**Kathy Richardson**, Executive Director, Our Community

**Kerryn Burgess**, Editor, Our Community

# ABOUT GIVENOW

**GiveNow is a commission-free online donations platform for not-for-profits. GiveNow is an initiative of the Our Community Foundation, a not-for-profit established through the financial support of the Our Community group.**



# ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

**The Our Community group provides advice, connections, training and easy-to-use tech tools for people and organisations working to build stronger communities.**

**Our partners in that work are not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises; government, philanthropic and corporate grantmakers; donors and volunteers; enlightened businesses; and other community builders.**

**A Certified B Corporation and multi-award-winning social enterprise, Our Community's offerings include:**

**OurCommunity.com.au** – Australia's centre for excellence for the nation's 600,000 not-for-profits and schools: where not-for-profits go for help

**Institute of Community Directors Australia** – the best-practice governance network for the members of Australian not-for-profit boards, committees and councils, and the senior staff who work alongside them

**FundingCentre.com.au** – the best place to go to get information on grants and fundraising in Australia

**Good Jobs** – Connecting good people with social sector jobs, board vacancies and internships

**Communities in Control** – Australia's most inspiring annual community sector gathering: thought leadership for the not-for-profit sector

**Australian Institute of Grants Management** – information, inspiration and education for government, philanthropic and corporate grantmakers

**SmartyGrants** – software and data science for revolutionary grantmakers

**For more information about Our Community, visit [www.ourcommunity.com.au/aboutus](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/aboutus).**

**Our Community**

**51 Stanley Street  
West Melbourne, Vic 3003  
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**Tel (03) 9320 6800**

**[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)**

**[www.givenow.com.au](http://www.givenow.com.au)**

# NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.





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**(03) 9320 6848**



**[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)  
[www.givenow.com.au](http://www.givenow.com.au)**



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Where not-for-profits go for help**

