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Nominations for Moral Fairground's innovative awards program now open**Australian Ethical to sponsor Ethical Enterprise Awards 2017**

Nominations are now open for enterprises in Australia who do good for people, the planet and animals to be recognised through Moral Fairground's innovative awards program.

Winners will be announced at an Awards dinner in Melbourne on 16 October to coincide with Moral Fairground's Ethical Enterprise Conference, an educational and networking event bringing ethical and social enterprises together to discuss challenges, issues and opportunities facing the sector.

Sponsored by Australian Ethical, the **Ethical Enterprise Award** is open to purpose-driven businesses with an Australian Business Number (ABN) or Australian organisations over 18 months old that deliver innovative work with a positive social, environmental or economic impact either locally or internationally.

The winner will receive a cash prize of \$10,000 courtesy of Australian Ethical and gain national recognition throughout the business, non-profit and social enterprise sector for their contribution to society, and their unique vision and leadership.

Past winners of the Ethical Enterprise Award include:
2014 – Seven Women based in Melbourne, Victoria
2015 – Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia based in Turrumurra, NSW
2016 – Pollinate Energy based in Melbourne, Victoria

Australian Ethical has sponsored the awards since their inception, in line with its strong belief in building and supporting ethical enterprises to continue their work and improve the world we live in.

Commenting on this year's launch, Australian Ethical Managing Director Phil Vernon said: "The Ethical Enterprise Awards are an important way to recognise leading social enterprises and support them to continue their positive work into the future.

"Australian Ethical is committed to making money do good for clients, shareholders and the planet. We do this through our ethically screened investments, by donating 10% of our post-tax profits to charity, and by sponsoring inspiring organisations like Moral Fairground."

Anna McGregor, Australian National Manager for Pollinate Energy, said the enterprise used the prize money from last year's award to buy hundreds of life-changing products for people in the slums of Lucknow, in northern India.

Pollinate was founded in 2012 with a mission to bring solar light to India's slums by empowering locals, dubbed "pollinators" to set up small businesses to sell the lights to families in their communities. Families pay off the lights in a few weeks with the money they would otherwise spend on fuel for toxic and ineffective kerosene candles. Pollinate is currently operating in five cities and has a mission to be operating in 20 cities by 2020.

Ms McGregor said the prize money allowed Pollinate to pre-purchase solar lights, as well as solar fans, mosquito nets and mobile phones, for its pollinators to sell, and also trial new products such as various models of energy efficient stoves, during the start-up phase of its operations in Lucknow.

"It really filled a funding gap for us and allowed us to get those products out there. Also, because we've had this funding support in Lucknow, it meant we were able to be in our fifth city much quicker. We've just launched into Kanpur, which is 100 kilometres down the road from where Moral

Fairground helped us. So that's incredible in itself, and essentially that means we are going to reach thousands more people a lot quicker this year," Ms McGregor said.

As well as having a shot at the prize money, finalists will have access to media, publicity and business development opportunities. This year, prizes include \$7,000 for the runner-up. The third prize winner will receive \$6,000 of professional business coaching.

Nominations are also open for the **Early Ethical Entrepreneurs Pitch Competition**, another Moral Fairground initiative, which is open to start-up businesses that have the potential to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions of an overseas or local community.

Shortlisted applicants for the Early Ethical Entrepreneurs Pitch Competition will have the opportunity to present their idea to four business and social entrepreneurial leaders at the Ethical Enterprise Conference on 16-17 October.

Winners will have access to the expertise of mentors like Australian Ethical's Phil Vernon to help guide them through the nuances of establishing and growing their business.

Last year's winner was Fruit2Work, a social enterprise startup that creates jobs for former offenders by selling fruit to businesses in Melbourne.

Fruit2Work co-founder Ariel Hersh said exposure associated with participating in the pitch competition helped the startup to find customers and it is now selling around four times as much fruit as it was at the time of the competition late last year.

"It really raised awareness of what we do to a bigger group of people which was great. We are still a very young business and the more people that hear about us, the more opportunities they have to support us through buying fruit," Mr Hersh said.

Submissions for the Ethical Enterprise Award and the Early Ethical Entrepreneurs Pitch Competition are open until 1 September.

- Ends -

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About Australian Ethical

Australian Ethical is Australia's leading ethical wealth manager. Since 1986, Australian Ethical has provided investors with wealth management products that align with their values and without compromising returns. Investments are guided by the Australian Ethical Charter which both shapes its ethical approach, and underpins the Company's culture and vision.

Australian Ethical has approximately \$2 billion in funds under management, across superannuation and managed funds.

Visit: www.australianethical.com.au

About Moral Fairground

Moral Fairground is a Melbourne-based social enterprise and organiser of the annual Fair@Square, Australia's largest ethical and fair-trade festival. Having been operating with the ethical sector since 2009, Moral Fairground's aim is to create positive social impact by increasing economic opportunities and fairness within society – achievements met by creating avenues for enterprises to become more effective in delivering their social mission.

Learn more at moralfairground.com.au