



Community Engagement Framework

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Community Engagement

Our Experience with Community & Philanthropic Support

Nicholas Assef, founder & Managing Director of Halo, believes targeted and “grass-roots” philanthropic support is an important and necessary part of working with and in communities.

From the Founder of Halo – Nicholas Assef

My wife Kelly & I, have extensive personal experience and a track record of assisting communities and charities in the most fundamental ways. This journey of philanthropy deepened for us with the Black Saturday Bushfires that struck Victoria. Within days of that tragedy we organised & donated furniture, clothes, electrical goods and sundry items which were mustered in Sydney, loaded on the back of a rented semi-trailer and driven to an area where locals had lost everything. This happened within days of the tragedy.

Families had their worldly possessions vapourised in minutes, with the speed and ferocity of those blazes. The feedback from individuals who suddenly had basic furnishings, electronic goods, toys for kids and clothing was humbling.

As one person put it *“I was looking at the prospect of renting an empty home for my family. We had absolutely nothing before your gesture. We would have literally been sitting and sleeping on the floor. Thankyou.”*

Understanding & observing the visible benefit of that targeted action, when charitable funds were struggling to get money into the region in an acceptable time period, was a revelation to us. How to make a little bit go a long way.

That was back in 2009. In the decade since over \$300,000 has been directly & personally donated or raised through charitable functions for causes. Some of these include:

- The Sydney Children’s Hospital Foundation
- Cure For Life Foundation
- Variety – The Children’s Charity
- Various charities associated with the treatment and support of individuals with the auto immune disease Alopecia
- Fijian, Cambodian and Vietnamese orphanages

The Annual “Beach House Lunch” in Sydney, which Kelly founded and runs, has pleasingly raised over A\$100,000 in the last 4 years for the Sydney Children’s Hospital Foundation. Each year a specific project is chosen in collaboration with the Hospital – ensuring direct and visible impact of donations.

A core objective is that donations and support are directed at targeted projects. This contrasts to placing money into general “funds”, which are high on administration costs and low on visibility of impact of support.

This track record & experience of delivering support shapes the way in which Halo Renewable Energy approaches the task of Community Engagement for its solar farm project developments.

What should Community Support deliver?

Targeted, direct and visible benefit to initiatives that matter.

This is our “mission statement”.



As an initial step and a “precedent” in late November 2019 considerable goods were donated to the “Fierce Female Farmer” movement in Inverell for support of their efforts to make the lives of the rural community just a little bit better during the drought. We personally drove those goods to Inverell to make a crucial deadline.

This first step in support encapsulates a number of key factors for any community initiative. Those include:

1. We have direct line of sight on how money / donations are used and a specific understanding of the benefit
2. We have confidence that the initiative will be actioned in its entirety and on agreed timetable
3. A clear understanding of the tangible benefits (*be that short term or long term*) of the initiative

This defined framework allows us to easily consider and categorise requests for support into “nice to have” and “must have”. We use allocated support funds wisely and with purpose to generate maximum impact.

A “functional bias” to community support initiatives

There are no fixed rules nor formula, and all things are approached with an open mind.

One clear area where we see benefit, in particular during drought conditions, is the technical accreditation of rural professionals for jobs on our solar developments.

This might include, for example, basic trade qualifications for:

- Assisting with surveying activities
- Operating heavy machinery on construction sites or in other work places
- Operating tractors and equivalent machinery as a part of solar farm maintenance (following construction)

Such an approach to community support can also lead to the incubation of “micro businesses” which in turn both keeps money in rural communities and offers wider sustainable job and revenue opportunities.

The reality is that most rural professionals already are experts in many relevant tasks. They just require a “ticket” which is fundamental to working on project sites.

We also do not believe that this is Halo’s responsibility in isolation, and will seek to engage and discuss with local, state and federal governments on support initiatives that they might see as appropriate & available to compliment this “functional bias” to any support.

Project by Project Focus

To ensure a balanced approach to community support, any initiatives will be administered through the specific project Special Purpose Vehicles as those developments mature.

We will make announcements on the specific project sites from time to time discussing the timing of community initiatives.

We also are careful to discuss and outline our philosophy and plans to Local Councils and Interest Groups. Conversations with such entities are invaluable, and also help shape the specific areas of support that can make a difference at a specific point in time.

Questions & Communication

Delivering grass roots support is a case by case endeavour. we are always learning, and keen to understand ways in which we can improve the strategy and implementation of support.

Open discussions are welcomed, and in the first instance they can be directed to:

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