Effective Altruism
Australia

Strategic Plan

2025-2027

Acknowledgment of Country

Effective Altruism Australia (EAA) acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continued connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all First Nations people past and present.

Introduction



Michael Noetel
Chair, 2024

In 2015, EAA started as a small team of volunteers trying to enable tax-deductible grants to the most effective global health charities. As the EA movement has grown, so has EAA. We started working to grow and strengthen the EA community, and we expanded into other cause areas (setting up EA Australia Environment). We are increasingly responsible for stewarding effective altruism in Australia (e.g., hosting the national conference).

We exist because effective altruism makes the world a better place. Our core principles are unique and powerful[1]:

- We think helping 10 people is better than 1, and helping 100 is better than 10;
- We look for the truth, even when it's hard;
- We hold compassion for distant others, not *just* those close to us; and
- We realise our time and money are limited, so we're willing to make hard trade-offs.

EAA helps us stand shoulder to shoulder as a flourishing community that is doing good, better with our time and our donations.

For me, effective altruism has given my life new levels of meaning. I always wanted to help others but was never sure if my efforts were in vain. Effective altruism first helped me to become more confident I could *actually* save lives with my donations. It then gave me a Bunnings-load of tools to learn so I could do more good with my time. It connected me with some of the most compassionate and dedicated people I have met, and inspired new ambition for my impact on the world.

We hope EAA can inspire this ambition for a growing number of people. The core ideas of EA resonate with most Australians: they want to do good, and do it more effectively. What follows is our working model for how we want to help them do that. With EAA, we hope to help Australians work together to do good, better.

Mission

Support Australians to tackle the world's most pressing problems.

We do this by supporting Australians to donate to alleviate global poverty, tackle climate change, and supporting the Australian effective altruism community.

Vision

Australians are the world's most generous and active supporters of effective causes.

[1] Largely taken from Core EA principles, CEA will continue to take a "principles-first" approach to EA, and EA is three radical ideas I want to protect

Our Values

Commitment to Others: We take the well-being of others seriously and are dedicated to making a positive impact by actively working to improve the world.

Put purpose first: Doing good in the world is our primary goal. We are assessed on our impact and outcomes.

Collaborative Spirit: We foster a friendly and inclusive environment that welcomes diverse approaches and perspectives. We treat everyone respectfully and kindly. We treat our team with warmth and support. We treat our community with a welcoming, win-win mentality.

Scientific Mindset: We base our actions on the best available evidence and reasoning, valuing humility, seeking critiques, embracing new ideas, and considering alternative perspectives.

Openness: We prioritise doing the most good and remain open to different causes and approaches, willing to change our beliefs and actions based on compelling arguments and evidence. We operate in perpetual beta, always look to experiment, learn, and improve.

Integrity: Trust, cooperation, and accurate information are crucial, so we strive to be honest, trustworthy, and adhere to ethical conduct that promotes thriving communities.

The above values are predominantly based on the Centre for Effective Altruism's Guiding Principles, which we endorse.

Opportunities

The global effective altruism movement provides a steady stream of Australians who are newly interested in effective giving and effective altruism, and our community is bolstered by organisations such as 80,000 Hours, and public figures like Peter Singer, Will MacAskill and Toby Ord. We know that the top way people find out about us is through the books, papers, podcasts and speeches that these leaders have produced.

We benefit from donors who have found us via GiveWell or via our charity partners who GiveWell recommends. Our charity partnerships create value for us, the partner and our donors. Our donor base remains diverse and solid.

Our Challenges

Along with many opportunities, we face some challenges.

The first challenge is our role in the Australian charity space. Our mission is about our beneficiaries - not about us. We need to offer counterfactual benefits to those in need. Unlike some countries, Australia has multiple giving platforms, including The Life You Can Save. EAA's strategy needs to create a value proposition for our donors that leads to better outcomes for our beneficiaries. This raises issues of who we can reach, how we can reach them, and whether that's different from what similar organisations can do. Note that if the tax rules change to include other cause areas, this may change the landscape substantially, as EAA may be able to process donations to more cause areas.

The second challenge is branding. Since 2016, the effective altruism movement has evolved, but our constitution and the laws that govern us have remained largely the same. The effective altruism movement now encompasses a broader range of ways of doing good than EAA can lawfully support. For instance, Australian law limits EAA's ability to support the welfare of animals or people who have yet to be born. This means that EA could apply a broader range of causes than we currently support.

A related challenge is that public opinion of effective altruism suffered some setbacks. While effective altruism branding offers significant opportunities, it may inhibit our ability to grow donations with some donors.

The third challenge is organisational structure and sustainability. EAA achieved significant success with limited operational spending. This has come with several challenges, including adopting key-person risks, placing substantial responsibility on volunteers, overburdening ICT systems, and placing management responsibilities on volunteer board members. As EAA has expanded - both in terms of donations processed and streams of work - the historic approach is no longer viable. As EAA looks to the future, we will consider hiring a CEO or executive director and taking other steps towards organisational resilience.

Australia is a lucky country. We are among the richest countries and average Australian incomes are higher than 97.5% of the world. This puts us in an excellent position to improve the lives of others. We see ourselves as part of a global community committed to saving and improving the lives of people everywhere.

Who are we supporting to do good?

Acknowledging that our mission is about our beneficiaries, we recognise that there are two overlapping groups of people who we help to do good:

Donors

Mainly give financial contributions to our partner charities. They typically come to us via private research (books, podcasts and Ted Talks) though occasionally through word-of-mouth. They are typically older and more financially secure. They may be less interested in volunteering or career change and might not come to EAGx, but might volunteer their particular expertise to assist on discrete tasks. They would attend professional events in corporate-style environments.

Community

They might give money (e.g., take the 10% pledge) but mainly give their time, skill and expertise directly to effective causes. They are more interested in learning about Effective Altruism. Among these are:

Students

People who are exploring ideas and careers. They typically come to us via their own private discovery (books, podcasts and Ted Talks), though also through university groups and word-of-mouth. They are typically younger and less financially secure. They love challenging, weird ideas. They are curious, interested in volunteering, and figuring out what to do with their career and love EAGx.

Experts

Our experienced attendees and speakers in EA causes (or EA-aligned causes) who are looking to recruit talent, and gain a platform for their ideas and initiatives (including recordings of their presentations where available to help share content).

Professionals

Mid-career professionals who do not work in EA fields but are interested in EA but are less able to make significant changes and less sure about how to switch to a more impactful career. They need a framework to "find people where they are" and give time and money effectively without making immediate career switches. Supporting our community is an important path to impact because the world's most pressing problems face constraints in both money and talent. Empowering talented Australians to work on pressing problems helps us achieve our mission.

Supporting both donors and the community helps achieve our mission. However, each group has different needs and priorities. We want to offer different website journeys, newsletters and events to support both and make incremental changes to facilitate that as soon as possible within our existing resources. We want to apply our resources equally to both groups.

Core Objectives

Core Objectives: the three most important things that we want to achieve in the next three years.

Goals: the 4-6 most important targets for us to achieve for each objective.

Coherent Actions: 4-6 concrete, specific, measurable, and executable projects for each objective. Objectives and goals are not enough. Strategy is about action.

Core Objective 1 - deliver more money to high-impact causes

~15%
average annual compounded

Why?

For most Australians, donating to highly effective charities is one of the easiest and likely most impactful ways they can help others. With most Australians ranking among the top 4% of global income earners—and over a million in the top 1%—there is significant untapped potential for greater levels of giving, and more effective giving. While thousands have already taken up the opportunity to give effectively, many more remain unaware that it exists. By strengthening EAA's website, user journey, branding, e-communications, and internal fundraising infrastructure in the short term, we'll be in a much stronger position to reach new audiences, convert potential donors, and improve retention and upgrade rates among existing supporters. From these foundations, I'm excited by how EAA can push into new territories in 2025-27 with a clear and compelling offering, including via traditional media, on stage, and online.

Objective 1 – Goals

We will do this by an incremental growth strategy of:

1. Retain and upgrade existing donors.
2. Attract new mid-to-high value donors.
3. Grow total funds raised by 10% to EOFY '25 (~$500k), 15% to '26 (~$950k), and 20% (~$1.4m) to '27.
4. Applying for further grants for fundraising operations (e.g., a Head of Fundraising position for FY2026 and FY2027) but otherwise subsuming the fundraising function into the CEO function.



Thomas King
EAA Development Director 2024

Objective 1 – Coherent Actions

1. **User experience (H1 2025):** prioritise high-quality, low-friction user experience for donors through our website, donation portal, and professional and helpful interactions with our people.
   Projects:
   a. donation portal updates (Q4 2024);
   b. full website audit and user-centric updates (Q1 2025);
   c. ensure professional customer service in-place (ongoing: enquiries team + relationship manager/s—Dev Director now, then CEO;
   d. explore peer-to-peer fundraising infrastructure, e.g. personal campaign pages.
2. **Campaigns and e-comms (2025 and beyond):** regular campaign offers, impact/information updates and thank-yous, and shareable content, to engage and inspire existing donors and enable them to enlist others.
   Projects and timeframes:
   a. festive season campaign (Q4 2024 then annual);
   b. EOFY campaign (annual);
   c. impact updates (2x, ~Mar+Sept);
   d. card system expanded to birthdays (Q1 2025);
   e. explore peer-to-peer fundraising infrastructure;
   f. TBD: hire digital mar-comms staff member.
3. **Events, media and digital media (2025 and beyond):** pursue new prospective donor audiences via hosting events, speaking at events, traditional media and op-eds, podcasts, and/or content marketing.
   Projects and timeframes:
   a. GiveDirectly/The Life You Can Save event collaboration (Dec 2024);
   b. identify and pursue conference speaking opportunities (2025);
   c. content marketing and op-eds including at EOFY (2025);
   d. further explore corporate opportunities (2025).

The collective impact of EAA's donor community is inspiring. In 2022-2023, our donations supported over a million people and saved roughly 1,000 lives. This includes 430,000 children given preventive antimalarial drugs and 420,000 provided with vitamin A supplements.



EAGxAustralasia 2024 *(see below)*

Core Objective 2 - build the effective altruism community

Why?

Because local and national communities are an essential part of how people come to take impactful actions by learning about the ideas, sustaining their engagement over time, and making impactful decisions (i.e., careers and donations).

Objective 2 – Goals

1. Increase number of people engaged.
2. For those already engaging, increasing motivation and quality.
3. Quality of events and community.
4. Increasing high-impact careers.

Objective 2 – Coherent Actions

1. **Run EAGx as the centrepiece (2025 - 2027):** A strong focus on EAGx as our key community event. Continue to emphasise the value of 1-on-1 catch ups, and making connections between highly engaged community members. Attract quality keynote speakers. Focus on a long lead up to the conference to build excitement (and consider trialling a smaller, "mid-year" conference in 2025 for a specific audience) and introduce people who they will see at conference. Focus on follow ups from conference to encourage effective actions.
2. **Focus on connection and purpose (2025 - 2027):** Increasing number of people engaged by creating groups and events that focus equally on:
    a. Social connection - providing a welcome and friendly environment rather than transactional or academic. Leaving space to get to know each other. Encourage "speed networking" style events.
    b. Sense of purpose - promoting EA ideas and concepts that feel important and give people purpose including book clubs, and lightning talks. Ensuring events are not just discussion forums, but have calls to action (including volunteering opportunities) and encourage accountability.
3. **Diverse attendees to unlock talent (2025 - 2027):** Focusing on diverse attendees (particularly gender) because we believe that we are missing out on talent and skills by not targeting all audiences. We will do this through visible role models at EAGx and university groups.
4. **Support local groups & organisers (2025 - 2027):** Making community groups sustainable by providing a small amount of funding for local organisers to use, and providing short guides for organising and facilitating events in each city.
5. **Careers and introductions (2025 - 2027):** Increasing high-impact careers by maintaining good relationships with Australians abroad. Introducing facilitating introductions to people who are early to mid career interested in effective careers. Increase our number of 1 on 1 advising sessions and introductions by 25% each year.



Elliot Taperman
Head of Community

"When we look at journeys of the people doing exceptional work in effective altruism, their local communities often play an essential role (42% of the time). We're excited to support the individuals and communities around Australia, which in turn plays a pivotal role in people's journeys towards impact."



Bridget Loughhead
Community Manager

"EAGx serves a crucial role in the effective altruism community as a space for people to meet. We introduce people who might never have met otherwise, accelerate their intellectual endeavours, and focus on getting things done. I want EAGx to normalise effective giving and effective careers and create a culture of action and behavioural change."

Core Objective 3 - sustain the organisation

Why?

Because robust, professional processes help us retain donor confidence, manage risk, and attract and retain great people.

Objective 3 – Goals:

1. Hire a quality CEO and transition them well to the role.
2. Build sustainable operational funding.
3. Build and maintain sustainable operations (finance and IT) infrastructure and processes. Document our processes.
4. Though policy will not be a core process, contribute to policy reform where we can and re-visit our contribution to policy if and when DGR law changes allow it.

Objective 3 Coherent Actions

We will do this by:

1. **Fund, select and onboard CEO (H1 2025)** - Successfully onboarding a CEO (with the candidate selected by 31 March 2025 and starting by 1 July 2025) who is organised, self-directed, a good public presence and donor representative, mature and calm, and of good alignment with our mission and values (but not necessarily someone who is heavily involved in EA). We hope to fund a significant part of this role for the first year through our pending EA Infrastructure Fund grant, but will otherwise fund the role from drawing from our donation pool. We will communicate with donors to see if a portion will notionally allocate their donations to CEO or operations funding.
2. **Sustainable operational funding (2025 - 2027):** Securing sustainable sources of operational funding, including by increasing donor contributions to our operations by:
    a. Evolving our messaging to donors that our growth over the last few years has led to a different model with a bigger donation draw.
    b. In light of only 3% of 2024 donations to EAA explicitly included support for operations, actively prompting donors to support operations with an additional donation.
    c. Allowing and encouraging operations donations and growing that to 5% by 31 December 2025 and then covering the CEO salary by end of 2027.
3. **IT for equal parts maintenance and growth (2025 - 2027):** Build out IT and operations infrastructure to support:
    a. Maintenance IT: e.g., website functionality, newsletters, cybersecurity upgrades, and routine IT requests and troubleshooting.
    b. Growth IT projects: e.g., a new CRM, better donor experience, better conference attendee experience, and support for effective giving programs such as the Christmas e-Cards) to ensure EAA's donor experience remains high-quality, our team can leverage enabling systems and data-driven insights, and risks are managed.



Greg Sadler
Director

Professionalism and good governance are the foundations of everything we do. Not only are they essential to pursuing our mission, but without them, we could jeopardise it. Given our challenges, in particular those from growing the organisation, good governance is more important than ever. If we get these things right, we can make more of a difference, and we can do it long into the future.

Extend Nathan Sherburn's contract (and create a permanent role focused on maintenance and growth projects) to at least 2.5 days until 31 December 2027.

4. **Internal processes (2025):** Maintaining and documenting internal processes for cybersecurity, and board processes by assembling and collating (because we know a lot of the information and documents already exists) an EAA Handbook by 31 December 2025 that addresses questions in enough written detail to support a handover of all key roles and processes. Keep the existing structure of Nathan's position as Chief Information Officer and make Joanna Walter's position Head of Operations.
5. **Financial processes (2025):** Maintaining and documenting processes for finance by:
    a. Tracking the revenue growth figures as a key performance indicator by developing KPI reporting to monitor progress effectively. This links directly back to supporting Objective 1 by providing measurable insights to drive growth.
    b. Supporting EAGx with processes, payments, and reconciliation. This supports Objective 2.
    c. Tracking operational funding to ensure sustainability and tightly managing cash flow. Developing processes to support this.
    d. Conducting a process review and updates to ensure all finance and operations processes are fully documented.
6. **Policy (2025 - 2027):** Continue appropriate engagement with the government and the professional community on policy issues of the day. As good corporate citizens, EAA will contribute to productive engagement with the regulator, government and the broader community. Pending any changes to the law, we will revisit our focus on impactful policy in 2025-2027. Continue engagement with Government on Productivity Commission Report on expanding DGR.
7. **Compliance (2025 - 2027):** Meeting all compliance obligations and best practice. No adverse audit findings throughout the period.

Global inequality is extreme. Over 700 million people live on less than the equivalent of ~A$2.80 per day (This is already adjusted for the fact that money goes further in poor countries). Because of this, transferring resources to the very poorest people in the world can do a huge amount of good.

Blue Sky and discussions for the future

We recognise that there are important decisions that EAA might look to make in the future and record them here:

- A long-term strategy of exponential growth in our donor base. Our current focus is on consolidating our donor pool and building sustainable operations. A future board may consider more aggressive fundraising initiatives that would require further resources.
- Exploring potential new revenue streams such as major conferences, memberships, and merchandise.
- Dividing the brands or the organisation into separate fundraising and community arms. Our current strategy is keeping the two brands within the one organisation.
- Merging or partnering with another effective giving organisation. Our current focus is in fundraising using the EAA brand and through the existing DGR-endorsed organisation.
- Running our own grants program to support fellowships and community initiatives.
- Organising or sponsoring EAGx in Asia.
- Being the lead organisation for a much larger (1000+ attendees) global non-profit conference to promote EA causes to a broader, non-profit audience.
- Office space and co-working space in Sydney or Melbourne that can house employees and volunteers, host events, and create a sense of home.

We commit to reviewing all of these ideas in November/December 2025, but recognise that some of them might be longer term than that.



Luke Furness
Director

We are the stewards of millions of dollars going to save thousands of lives every year. Nothing excites me more than the thought of building an organisation that can do that for decades to come. I know we have the right people and the right plan to get us there.

Next steps for implementing this plan

By 31 March 2025:

- Hire the CEO and communicate the decision - the Board.
- Present this plan to all employees and volunteers by mid-February 2025 - the Board.
- Consider setting and communicating a giving multiplier based on fundraising budget and allocations of salaries from employees with fundraising responsibilities - Head of Fundraising.
- For each Goal and Coherent Action, consider whether the board or the staff should provide more detail and agree on those details - Head of Fundraising, Head of Community and Board.
- Prepare skeleton of EAA Handbook - Head of Finance and Operations.
- Communicate to donors the shift in draw from donations - Head of Fundraising and Board.
- Agree IT maintenance and IT growth projects for 2025 - Chief Information Officer and Board.

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