

UN picks Melbourne for new HQ

- Olga Galacho
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US-american actress Angelina Jolie displays her UN passport. She is the U.N. refugee agency's Goodwill Ambassador. Picture: AP.

Source: AP

THE United Nations has chosen Melbourne to be the worldwide headquarters for its corporate social responsibility program.

The initiative will establish a co-operative network for 7700 corporates from around the world to share expertise on community investment and philanthropy.

A memorandum of understanding between the UN Global Compact Office and a group of Melbourne business and ethics leaders paved the way for the soon to be established secretariat.

Chairman of the interim Principles for Social Investment secretariat Andrew MacLeod said the initiative had the potential to attach a cultural identity to Melbourne in the same way The Red Cross had shaped Geneva's public image.



Mr MacLeod, a veteran humanitarian aid worker and chief executive of the Committee For Melbourne, and St James Ethics Centre executive director Simon Longstaff negotiated the deal with the UN.

"This will give Melbourne a long-term brand with the big consulting companies of the world seeing us as the centre of expertise on corporate social responsibility," Mr MacLeod said.

The new secretariat's interim board includes Mr Longstaff and representatives from Ernst & Young, Clayton Utz, ANZ and National Australia Bank, and is advised by Sid Myer, Gareth Evans, BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto.

Mr MacLeod said having the miners on side made sense because they spend more on community development programs in Third World countries than most companies.

The secretariat has three years to prove it can be viable or risk the UN withdrawing its backing.

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