

Profile: Robert Glasser

CARE Australia's chief executive on giving peace a chance.

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Lucinda Schmidt

This is a tightly written 625 word profile that mixes an interesting story of Robert Glasser's background, career and beliefs with a specific focus on his role as an executive and investor appropriate to the focus of the newspaper magazine for which it was written.

Element	Text	Comment
<i>Opening Anecdote</i>	<p>When Robert Glasser was growing up in Los Angeles in the 1970s, the city tested its air raid sirens on the last Friday of every month. Glasser, 47, now the chief executive of CARE Australia, still remembers the wailing hum of the sirens and his teacher yelling "drop" as the students dived under their desks.</p> <p>One Wednesday the sirens went off and Glasser was convinced it was the start of a nuclear war between the US and the Soviet Union.</p>	<p><i>This is a colourful and arresting anecdote and a good way to begin the profile but it also immediately communicates other information very compactly:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Glasser grew up in the USA</i><i>• He is CEO of Care</i><i>• He is 47</i>

<p><i>Linking quote</i></p>	<p>"That's what got me interested in peace issues," says Glasser, who went on to research and work in arms control institutions in the US and London, before moving to Canberra in 1995 with his Australian-born wife to work for the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).</p>	<p><i>The quote is simple and direct and is a smart linking device that explains the relevance of the anecdote to the rest of the article</i></p> <p><i>Again the rest of the para quickly:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It gives a whirlwind tour of Glasser's career</i> • <i>It explains his transition to living in Australia and</i> • <i>It tells us he has an Australian wife</i>
<p><i>Career background</i></p>	<p>During Glasser's eight years at AusAID, where he rose to assistant director-general in charge of the largest program, in Papua New Guinea, the agency funded several projects run by CARE Australia and he was impressed by its staff's dedication. "They were always in the most remote areas with a focus on getting help to people - practical rather than ideological."</p>	<p><i>Note the way AusAID is used as a linking device between the end of the previous para and the beginning of this one.</i></p> <p><i>The next transition is also then made skilfully from AusAID to CARE</i></p>
<p><i>Organisation background</i></p>	<p>CARE describes itself as Australia's largest non-religious, non-political aid organisation, with 1000 staff overseeing emergency relief and long-term development programs in overseas countries including Indonesia, Cambodia and Jordan. It was established here in 1987 by former prime minister Malcolm Fraser, as part of the global CARE umbrella group, operating from 70 countries.</p>	<p><i>This is a typical background para on CARE. Note how the writer introduces CARE gradually. First it is merely mentioned as part of Glasser's title, then it is introduced by association with other aid organizations then in this 5th para it is succinctly explained. This keeps the focus on the person rather than the organization</i></p>

<p><i>Link to business focus of MONEY</i></p>	<p>Glasser also felt CARE was run with business-like professionalism, which suited his entrepreneurial bent. Far from being an academic and bureaucrat with no knowledge of the real world, Glasser, while still a university student in Los Angeles, spent two years helping a group of disadvantaged children raise the money to buy a property in their local community and convert it into a park.</p>	<p><i>Now Glasser's association with CARE is linked to "his entrepreneurial bent" creating a direct focus for the Money orientation of the magazine.</i></p> <p><i>Note also that because the author introduced Glasser as growing up in LA in her introductory para she does not have to waste time here explaining his university years in LA.</i></p>
<p><i>Key Business anecdote</i></p>	<p>Shortly after, he launched a venture that earned him close to \$US100,000 (\$134,000) in 12 months: showing movies that were so awful they were hilarious. The idea came to him when he was visiting his parents and they were laughing their heads off at an old movie on television called Plan 9 from Outer Space. Glasser contacted the film's distributor and bought the US rights, then booked a cinema.</p> <p>The first night, only 40 people came to see the film. On the second night, Glasser had to turn away 100 people and the film screened every night for months to a packed audience of 500.</p> <p>Other films, bought by Glasser in partnership with actor Warren Beatty, included The Terror of Tiny Town, a musical western with a cast of</p>	<p><i>This is the key part of the article from the perspective of the audience and orientation of the magazine. It gives an example for readers of an imaginative yet unlikely money-making scheme.</i></p>

	<p>midgets, and Robot Monster, in which the monster was a man in a gorilla suit with a diving bell on his head. Using the profits from the bad movies venture, Glasser bankrolled a children's film for cable television and set up an optical disc technology company with some friends.</p>	
<p><i>Linking quote back to CARE</i></p>	<p>"I've always been busy and done lots of things," says Glasser, who laughs that his film business is not mentioned in his official CV on CARE's website.</p>	<p><i>The quote is used as a quick way of reintroducing Glasser's direct voice back into the article and then with the comment about his CV on CARE's website it creates a perfect transition into the final section about his career highlights and lowlights. The author could have easily just said "not mentioned in his official CV" but by adding "on CARE's website" this creates the transition back to CARE.</i></p> <p>ONE THING NOT TO DO: <i>Although this quote and comment skilfully make a transition the authors choice of phrase is problematic. She says Glasser "laughs that his film business is not mentioned in his official CV on CARE's website"</i> <i>This is a common sloppy construction that journalists use as if "laughing" is a form or way of speaking. You can't actually laugh and say something simultaneously</i></p> <p><i>Use a phrase like "he said with a laugh".</i></p>

<p><i>Career highlights</i></p>	<p>This month, he celebrates three years as CARE Australia's chief executive and he has no doubt about the lowlight. That came in 2004, when his country office director in Iraq was kidnapped and then shot in the head on video after two months in captivity.</p> <p>"It was easily my worst experience at CARE and one that unfortunately I will never get over," Glasser says.</p> <p>A month later came the Asian tsunami. He nominates CARE's response as the biggest achievement of his tenure.</p>	<p><i>The three year anniversary is a nice punctuation point that allows the overview to occur</i></p>
<p><i>Concluding quote</i></p>	<p>"I think it's true to say CARE is at its best in an emergency. The tsunami response was very difficult, but it was also a highlight."</p>	<p><i>This is a strong direct quote to finish on.</i></p>

<p><i>BoxOut</i></p>	<p>THE BIG QUESTIONS</p> <p>Biggest break: Being born in and living in a wealthy country. Anyone born in Australia, the US or Britain has a huge advantage from the moment they open their eyes.</p> <p>Biggest achievement: CARE Australia's response to the Asian tsunami. We, and others, helped give support to hundreds of thousands of people ' emergency food, shelter and safe water.</p> <p>Best advice: When I worked for a human rights organisation in Los Angeles, I complained to my boss that my in-tray kept filling up. He said, 'Sit down, do as much as you can and then go home.'</p> <p>Best investment: Time with my wife and kids [aged 13,11 and 7]. One regret I'm certain I won't have is wishing I'd spent more time with them.</p> <p>Worst investment: Time spent preparing and appearing before the Senate Estimates Committee when I was at AusAID.</p>	<p><i>This is a summary box-out or sidebar that is sued by this magazine in this section each week.</i></p> <p><i>It gives the facts at a glance.</i></p> <p><i>It is also a good way of using “left-over” anecdotes such as the “Best advice” story which may have come in the course of the original interview or may have been solicited specifically for this summary box.</i></p>
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