

Our Community MATTERS

Your community knowledge bank helping groups survive, improve, grow and innovate



Resources, News, Innovations and Tips on:

- ✓ Funding, Finance & Membership Management
- ✓ Leadership & Advocacy
- ✓ Management & Training
- ✓ Marketing & Media
- ✓ Boards, Committees & Governance
- ✓ Community & Business Partnerships
- ✓ Insurance & Risk Management

www.ourcommunity.com.au

February edition 2005

Welcome to the latest edition of *Our Community Matters*, our regular free community update. It is yet another benefit of membership of www.ourcommunity.com.au - the premier destination for Australia's 700,000 community, education and non-profit groups. Ourcommunity.com.au provides community groups with the latest funding and fundraising news as well as practical management, board, marketing and community business partnership information.

Our Community also operates the [Australian Giving Centre](#), the free online donation service that has so far raised more than \$4 million for Australian community appeals.

A summary of our services is listed at the end of this newsletter. If you have trouble reading this newsletter or have any comments please let us know at brianw@ourcommunity.com.au.

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1. Welcome by Rhonda Galbally AO, CEO of [ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

Welcome to Our Community Matters

This year already seems about six months old so much has happened over the past six or so weeks.

The tsunami disaster saw what was normally a quiet time for much of the community sector thrown into chaos as the major welfare groups ramped up their response and thousands of smaller groups assisted in organising fundraisers and support. It was an amazing effort – and a clear indication of what can be achieved at all levels when there is a real desire to get things done.

I thank all those people who donated to the various tsunami appeals through the Australian Giving Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/donations. The centre raised over \$3.3 million in the space of a couple of weeks which is quite extraordinary. We thank all the councils, businesses, media outlets, individuals and groups who linked to the Australian Giving Centre.

We tackle the issue of how the appeal will impact on local fundraising further down in this newsletter.

Two new centres

The start of the year has also seen a massive change to our website including the addition of two more centres of excellence:

- The Boards, Committees and Governance Centre (www.ourcommunity.com.au/boards)
- The Marketing, Media & Post Centre (www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapostcentre).

We are really excited with these two new centres and think you will be too. These are both great resources packed with free Help Sheets, tools and resources to help community groups become more adept at marketing and dealing with the media as well as running an effective, functional and focussed board. More details are contained in this newsletter setting out all the various features of the two centres.

The number of free Help Sheets now on the www.ourcommunity.com.au number over 450 as well as providing dozens of free resources, tools and features on the site.

Communities in Control Conference.

The program is here at last for the third annual Communities in Control conference and we think it will be another blockbuster this year. The conference, to be held on June 6-7, 2005, is titled ***Imagine: A healthy Future. Imagine: Where Communities are in control.***

To try and accommodate some of the hundreds of people who missed out last year we are holding a special pre-conference day with presentations and workshops on Boards on Sunday, June 5, 2005. Again we expect a big crowd so it is important that if people want to go, they book as soon as possible.

Visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/communitiesincontrol2005.pdf to download the program and order forms for the conference or call (03) 9320 6801 for one to be sent out to you.

This year is already shaping as a big year for community groups – and the need for strong leadership and good marketing and fundraising ideas will be needed more than ever before. Our mission is to provide you with the tools so that community groups have the necessary armoury to get on with the job.

RHONDA GALBALLY AO
Chief Executive Officer

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2. Our Community and Australia Post build new Marketing, Media & Post Centre.

Our Community and **Australia Post** have come together to establish a new Marketing, Media & Post Centre on the www.ourcommunity.com.au website.

The direct link is www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapostcentre.

The new **Marketing, Media & Post Centre** is an innovative site designed to provide Australia's 700,000 community groups with the practical tools and resources to expand their support and awareness base.

Australian community groups now have access to free information, tools and resources to develop marketing, mail marketing and communications campaigns as well as improving their relationships with the media.

The centre features over 100 new help sheets and provides templates, best practice examples, new tools and expert advice to help groups to communicate their objectives and outcomes.

The **Marketing, Media & Post Centre** has been made possible through the support of Australia Post and its commitment to enhancing the role of community groups in supporting key grass-roots initiatives across Australia.

The centre aims to assist community groups to:

- Develop a strong, consistent and compelling message;
- Create strategies to successfully communicate that message;
- Improve their ability to build media support and coverage;
- Improve the communications used to attract new members and expand their support base;
- Increase the effectiveness of their direct mail campaigns.

The new centre can be found at www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapostcentre.

Australia Post Managing Director, Mr Graeme John said Australia Post is committed to the new centre to enhance the communication services available to community groups.

"In particular we are delighted to share our expertise in mail marketing and we believe this centre will provide not-for-profit groups with the tools and practical knowledge to communicate with their target audiences more effectively."

The Marketing, Media & Post Centre features help sheets, tools and resources on:

- Marketing your group;
- The use of mail marketing and database management to increase support;
- Preparing media campaigns to raise awareness;
- Contacting media outlets, including a list of metropolitan, suburban and regional newspapers, television and radio stations;
- A postcode search for groups;
- Top tips;
- Research on marketing, and
- Highlighting Australia Post services including Charity Mail.

Other features include a link to a series of layouts to assist in preparing letter campaigns as well as access to a free picture library. A series of best practice case studies and examples will also be added to the site.

Dr Rhonda Galbally AO, Chief Executive Officer of Our Community, welcomed the new centre and the support of Australia Post whose assistance has made it possible.

"I applaud Australia Post for their vision in supporting a project that can benefit all community groups, big and small, from every part of the country," Dr Galbally said.

"As with all our centres of excellence, the Marketing Media & Post Centre is about providing practical, accessible information that all groups can use and adopt and adapt to their own situation."

"One of the biggest challenges facing community organisations is being able to communicate to the public about what they do, why they do it and why they need ongoing support. Through this alliance with Australia Post we believe we have created a terrific asset that will provide enormous benefits for groups in getting that message out."

"Australia Post should be congratulated for their efforts and we look forward to working with them in the future to expand this centre."

3. What impact will the Tsunami appeals have on local community groups in 2005?

A great deal has been written in recent weeks about the community reaction to the Asian Tsunami disaster and the possible impact of over \$200 million being donated to agencies assisting in the region.

Let's say from the outset that it was a fantastic effort and one that all Australians should be proud of. The response was incredible and the way that individuals, businesses, councils, community groups and Governments responded to that urgent need was just amazing – as was the speed with which the aid agencies moved into action.

The speed with which things moved along was quite incredible. It was amazing how things can happen, how governments and companies can make decisions within hours and how authorities can cut through the red tape immediately when the need is urgent and everyone shares a common desire to meet that need.

This is one of the reasons that we take the optimistic view that the increased growth in capacity at both an individual, family and business level and also the growth in the number of donors who have contributed provides community groups with longer-term opportunities – if they are prepared to do the hard work to capitalise on this capacity.

Firstly a couple of facts to keep in mind.

Many people have expressed concern that people who gave to the Tsunami appeals will not give to other appeals. The experience from the 9/11 appeals that followed the attacks in New York and Washington in 2001 is really the only similar fundraising event we have that can compare to the Tsunami appeals.

Back then:

- More than two thirds of all American households gave to the 9/11 appeals – raising more than \$US2.5 billion.
- **BUT** the \$2.5 billion was a fraction of the \$US212 billion of total US giving in 2001
- Giving in America rose to \$234 billion in 2002 and while the increase was small, many foundations and groups reported that the slump in the sharemarket (which started well before the attacks in New York and Washington) was cited as a much more important factor than the donations to the 9/11 appeals.
- The reality is that some groups were unaffected by the 9/11 appeals while others suffered drops in fundraising income.

In Australia the total amount donated to the Tsunami appeals has reached well over \$200 million. And that is Stage One of the response. But keep in mind that the total amount of support provided to community groups each year by individuals, businesses and foundations is over \$5.4 billion (ABS, 1997).

There is no doubt there will be challenges for many groups this year. Already some groups have been told they won't be getting their usual corporate donations which means that groups are going to have to work harder than ever before and go outside their normal support base.

But there are also opportunities for groups to continue to build on the capacity that was created by Australia's response to these appeals.

For starters:

- Tens of thousands of new donors have been inspired into action in Australia.
- Thousands of companies that did not previously have any commitment to community activities or did not believe they could or should make a difference now do.
- Tens of thousands of employees from all across Australia, from every type of business and every size business demanded that their companies or employers get involved in the response.
- Tens of thousands of employees worked together to come up with thousands of new ways that they could raise money for tsunami victims.
- Tens of thousands of donors donated online for the first time.

What it means is that for many businesses, they now have a process in place where staff and management have worked out how they can help.

In our January edition of the Raising Funds newsletter, we devoted much of the edition to fundraising ideas and strategies in light of the tsunami disaster.

As well as listing some of the innovative ways that groups, individuals and businesses raised money we also listed some tips for groups including:

- Review your fundraising strategy to see if the Tsunami appeals will have an impact. Consider whether you think it will make any impact at all and whether you will need to make changes.
- Decide now that you are going to need to communicate more often and more effectively with your supporter base. (If not sure how use the **Marketing, Media & Post Centre**).
- The strength of the Tsunami appeals was that the agencies were able to show they were reacting to an urgent need and went to great lengths to explain how the money would be spent. Does your communications pass this test? Do you explain both the need and exactly how you intend to meet it?
- How can you inspire some of the businesses who responded to these appeals to also consider supporting your work?
- How can you reach employees within businesses to champion your work and use the same processes they used to raise money for the Tsunami appeals for your group?
- Do you have an online facility to make it easy for people to donate to your group online?
- Do you have enough information on your website telling people **EXACTLY** why they should support your group?

There are many other lessons in the light of what we have learned from the overwhelming reaction to the biggest natural disaster of our times. Either way, rather than just talking about what has happened, we will endeavour to bring you ideas and tips on how to take a proactive approach to ensuring your group continues to grow.

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4. Build a better Board – find the answers to help your Board and Committee.

Community group Boards and committees experiencing difficulties can now find many of the tips for improving their governance, recruiting the right Board members, dealing with conflict or dysfunction and a host of other issues at our new Boards, Committees and Governance Centre.

The Boards, Committees & Governance Centre is the centrepiece of a landmark project of the Department for Victorian Communities, which deserves wide acclaim for such an important initiative with support being undertaken by the Municipal Association of Victoria and Our Community.

The Help Sheets, tools and resources are available online to all Australian community group and non-profit Board members.

The centre is at **www.ourcommunity.com.au/boards**.

Features of the centre include:

- **The Policy Bank** – an expanding set of template policies and procedures that can be downloaded, adapted and adopted by the Board. Close to 30 policies on major issues such as performance, grievance, harassment and diversity have been contributed by the global management consulting firm, **Accenture**.
- **The Resource Centre** – comprising dozens of free help sheets providing practical, jargon-free information about how people can join or improve a community group Board or Committee. Covers:
 - Before you join the Board
 - Recruitment, induction, training and succession
 - Assessing and improving your Board
 - Getting the nuts and bolts right
 - Fixing common Board problems
 - Boosting your own effectiveness
 - Fulfilling your governance role
 - Mapping your group's future
 - Towards More effective meetings
 - Managing the relationships
- **Board Matching Service** - a free Board Matching Service, which can be used by not-for-profit organisations from all over Australia to expand the pool of candidates they can call on to fill their vacancies. The Matching Service allows community groups to post their vacancies online at **www.ourcommunity.com.au/board-match** and specify exactly the sort of candidate they are looking for.
- **How-To Guides** – information about Our Community's range of easy-to-read governance handbooks.

- **Seminars & Workshops** – upcoming training for Victorian not-for-profit Boards and Committees, organised as part of the Victorian on Boards project.
- **Business on Boards** – a comprehensive resource to help guide companies wishing to engage with their communities by encouraging staff to join a community group Board.
- **Consultants' Register** – a free listing of not-for-profit Board experts – who they are and how to contact them.
- **Diversity on Boards** – comprising help sheets, links and other resources that can help your Board to meet the diversity challenge and enrich your decision-making process.

New newsletter to help groups to better understand their Board responsibilities.

The Centre also contains information about a new national Our Community newsletter, the **Board Builder**, which is designed to help guide Australian community group Board and Committee members in their governance role, providing tips and solutions to a range of issues they are likely to face.

The first edition of the *Board Builder* was released earlier this month, featuring a huge range of special articles and regular features including “Board Scribes”, “The Board Doctor”, “Board Utopia” and many more.

All of the resources and tools can be accessed by logging on to www.ourcommunity.com.au/boards.

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5. Program announced for Communities in Control conference PLUS extra day!

For those who have been eagerly awaiting the program of the **2005 Communities in Control conference** we are pleased at last to say that it is now available.

As mentioned last month the dates will be **June 6-7, 2005** with a special Boards and committees capacity-building day on **Sunday, June 5, 2005**.

The conference, titled **Imagine: A health Future. Imagine: Where Communities are in control**, will again be held at the Moonee Valley Racecourse in Melbourne and, given the capacity crowd last year, we are again expecting a strong demand for the limited spots. So book now and get the early bird discount).

Presenters for the conference include the 2005 Pratt International Fellow, Ms Judy Rogers, who as the CEO of the City of Vancouver in Canada has instituted a series of innovative and highly-awarded community-building measures that have given local communities more say in the policies and responses within the City.

She received the United Nations Award for Innovation in Public Service for her development of Neighbourhood Integrated Services Teams (NIST), a unique project that brings City departments and outside agencies together with empowered Vancouver residents to help solve difficult issues in their neighbourhood.

Under her stewardship, the City also won the rights to hold the 2010 Olympic Winter Games and was instrumental in ensuring that the Games include an inclusivity agreement that ensures organisers work with the lower-income, inner-city communities for mutual benefit.

Other speakers during the two-day conference, which will again be co-convened by Rhonda Galbally from Our Community and Fr Joe Caddy, CEO of Catholic Family Services, include:

- **Dr Betsy Blunsdon**, Deakin University, principal researcher into the relationship between individual's lives and their communities
- **Geraldine Doogue AO**, using all of her many roles in broadcasting (radio and television) to communicate social justice and spiritual ideals and solutions
- **Dick Estens**, Cotton Grower and community innovator who was recognised by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission for his work in developing a successful program to reinvent the town of Moree, NSW with a new approach to Aboriginal employment.
- **Rick Farley**, Former CEO, National Farmers' Federation and now a leader in the integration of reconciliation and environment into rural community priorities

- **Michelle Grattan** AO, Commentator, Fairfax Newspapers - highly respected journalist who for more than three decades has written on politics, government and analysis of Australian civic life.
- **Michael Hogan**, Deputy Director-General, Queensland, Department of Communities – supporting the revitalisation of Queensland’s community groups
- **The Hon Dr Barry Jones** AO, is one of Australia's living treasures and a deep thinker on the issues facing Australian communities. In his 1982 book *Sleepers Wake!* the former Minister of Science, Technology and the Future was the first to predict Australia’s move into the knowledge age, and to identify the challenges it would face.
- **The Honourable Justice Michael Kirby** AC CMG, Judge, High Court of Australia
- **Professor Robert Manne**, Associate Professor, Politics, La Trobe University – one of Australia’s most articulate contemporary public intellectuals and winner of the 2004 “Society” section of the Bulletin Magazine’s Smart 100
- **Clover Moore MP**, Lord Mayor of Sydney – pioneer of the community-based independent movement in local and state politics (to be confirmed)
- International Pratt Fellow **Judy Rogers**, CEO, City of Vancouver, Canada
- **Professor Neville Norman**, University of Melbourne – the most dynamic communicator on economic trends and their impact on communities.
- **Chris Sarra**, Principal, Cherbourg State School, Queensland - leader in developing new approaches to schooling for Aboriginal children
- **Dennis Trewin**, CEO, Australian Bureau of Statistics – pioneering social statistics that are leading to meaningful measurement of social capital in Australia.
- **Evan Thornley**, Founder and Chairman of global search engine company “Looksmart” and currently campaigning for Australia to develop its own future
- **The Hon John Thwaites**, Deputy Premier of Victoria and Minister for Victorian Communities

Pre-Conference Extra Special Day focussing on Boards and Committees

As mentioned earlier, there will be a pre-conference Capacity Building day for Boards and committees (and their members) which will be held on Sunday, June 5, 2005.

The conference will feature presentations from many great speakers, including:

- **Professor Susan Long**, Professor of Creative and Sustainable Organisations at RMIT University and internationally-renowned expert in organisational dynamics and change
- **Dr Jim Cavaye**, Director, Cavaye Community Development, Adjunct Professor, Institute for Sustainable Regional Development (CQU) and leading Australian community development practitioner, educator and researcher.
- **Professor Myles McGregor-Lowndes**, Director, Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies, Queensland University of Technology - An expert in community governance, non-profit law and regulation.
- **Stephen Mayne**, Founder of crikey.com.au, governance, media and shareholder activist.

Attendees will also be able to choose from a series of five workshops run by a great selection of community experts and practitioners. The workshops cover:

- Fiduciary Duties – keeping your Board safe
- Succession & Renewal
- Better Boards – Assessing & improving your Board
- Overcoming dysfunction
- Getting and Managing the Money

For more details on the conference and for prices please visit <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/communitiesincontrol2005.pdf>, email service@ourcommunity.com.au or call (03) 9320 6800.

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6. Have you applied for the Volunteer Small Equipment Grants yet?

Each year we have promoted the Volunteer Small Equipment Grants program run by the Federal Department of Family and again we are letting people know it is on.

Those groups that receive the **Easy Grants newsletter** have already received all the details and did so as soon as the latest funding round was announced (if you don't subscribe call Samantha Fritz on (03) 9320 6807) but if you haven't been aware of the funding program, now is the time to find out.

To find out more about the Volunteer Small Equipment Grants program or to link through to guidelines and forms, you can visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/funding_main.jsp.

This is a great program and allows volunteer groups to apply for up to \$3000 buy small equipment items that support the work of volunteers by making it easier, safer and/or more enjoyable.

This is the seventh funding round since the program began in 2001 and over \$26 million has been shared between approximately 11,500 volunteer community organisations. Under the Volunteer Small Equipment Grants 2005, priority will be given to organisations that:

- have relatively small operating budgets, limited funding sources and a relatively high volunteer to staff ratio;
- demonstrate that their requested equipment will provide maximum benefit to all their volunteers by making their work safer, easier and/or more enjoyable;
- demonstrate that the organisation's work supports families and/or strengthens their local communities;
- have requested equipment that will have maximum benefit in the local community for a small outlay;
- have not received funding under VSEG 2003 or VSEG 2004.

Previous applicants will need to reapply. Applications close at 5pm EDST Friday 4 March 2005. Remember visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/funding_main.jsp for details.

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7. Nominate your community leader for an award today!

Congratulations again to all those community leaders, volunteers and local can-do people who were recognised for their efforts in last month's Australia Day Honours.

Looking through the names, there were a number of local heroes and people who have made a major difference to their communities. But one thing was also clear. When it comes to nominating people to be honoured for their service and contribution to society, community groups are still a long way behind lawyers, doctors and academics in putting forward potential nominees.

Much of it is down to community groups just get on with doing the job and don't spend a lot of time navel-gazing about what a good job they have done. But sometimes they should.

We continue in our Raising Funds and Easy Grants newsletters to encourage groups applying for grants funding to consider the wider community benefits of their work – how what they are achieving fundamentally improves life for the whole community.

In the same way it is important that groups recognise the wider community benefits of their stalwarts and seek to have them recognised for their efforts. One way is to nominate them for an Australia Day honour

Here are some things to consider at your next Board meeting.

1. When the Australia Day Honours came out late last month, did anyone from your group or local area receive an award for their community service? If you don't have the list click on www.itsanhonour.gov.au/whats_New.cfm#Australia%20Day%20Honours%20List.
2. Ask yourself why not?
3. Ask the other Board members if there is someone in your organisation that you think has done something that has made a real impact in the local community and is deserving of wider recognition.
4. Jot down the main points of what they have done, how long they have done it and then go one step further and write down why that has made such an impact on your group – and provided a fundamental benefit for the whole community.
5. Ask yourselves whether you believe that contribution is worthy of them being nominated for an Order of Australia honour.

6. If the answer is yes, go to www.itsanhonour.gov.au/about/how_to_nominate.html and download an official nomination form and ensure that for your next meeting you have everything you need to nominate your special person.
7. The hardest work is done. Now it is a matter of ensuring the form is filled out with all the information required and sent back.
8. Congratulate yourselves for taking another step in recognising that your community work has an impact that goes way beyond the organisation itself.
9. If your nominated supporter is actually recognised, celebrate the achievement not just for them personally, but for your organisation and for the wider community.
10. Ask who else in the local community should be nominated for their effort.

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8. Community and sense of belonging are keys to wellbeing, according to new report

Community, social capital and “a sense of belonging” have been identified as central to people’s sense of wellbeing, according to the latest Australian Unity Wellbeing Index released last month.

The index – developed by Australian Unity and compiled by academics and researchers from Deakin University, the Australian National University and the University of Sydney – was launched in 2001 and is conducted on a quarterly basis.

The latest survey saw 2000 Australians surveyed on how satisfied they were with their own lives, and their satisfaction levels with life in Australia.

Professor Robert A Cummins, from Deakin University’s Australian Centre on Quality of Life and Wellbeing Index author, said the survey found that “safety, security and connection to others” were the keys to a greater sense of wellbeing.

“Social capital – the extent that people feel connected to others – has a huge impact on how people feel about their lives,” he said.

“The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index has consistently shown that people who connect to others feel better about their lives. Feeling socially isolated is bad for wellbeing.”

And Professor Cummins added that factors increasing wellbeing were found in greater abundance away from the nation’s major capital cities.

“This is very difficult to achieve in cities but appears to be highly evident in country cities and towns. Crowding people together in large cities cause people to feel alienated from one another rather than connected.

“People in rural and regional communities are more dependent on each other and therefore become a more socially cohesive group. This has a very positive impact on their wellbeing. And the further towns are away from capital cities, the higher their sense of belonging, safety and security.”

Other key findings from the index included:

- Full-time volunteers have the strongest sense of community connection.
- Females have higher satisfaction with their sense of community connection than males.
- Satisfaction with community connection increases with age.
- The sense of “belonging” in Australia decreases with income, meaning those “less well-off” are likely to feel more isolated or secure.
- Melbourne and Brisbane have the highest wellbeing amongst the cities, with Perth and Sydney lagging well behind. However, in world comparative terms, all Australian cities rate highly in terms of the wellbeing of their citizens.

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9. Community Briefs

Resources Deal extended - \$30 worth of savings still available!!!

Due to overwhelming response to December’s release of the Our Community Resource Guide and the three \$10 gift vouchers, we have decided to extend the \$30 savings until 30 March 2005.

To view a copy of the latest Our Community Resource Guide please click here:
www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/oc_resourceguide.pdf.

Otherwise you can request a copy to be sent via email or post from: samanthaf@ourcommunity.com.au

[Special Events link to help with your major events planning and publicity.](#)

We have now added a Calendar of Events to the Our Community site which can be found at
http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving/giving_article.jsp?articleId=888.

The calendar has some of the major events of awareness/advocacy fundraisers happening around Australia and is designed to help groups publicise their appeals and major events or days as well as providing a resource so community groups can check that their major appeals are not going to clash with similar events.

The calendar also includes:

- School holiday dates in every state and territory
- Public holiday dates in every state and territory
- Election dates in each state and territory
- United Nations designated years and decades.

While the calendar is not designed to include every one-off event, it is meant as a guide to assist groups in scheduling events, mailouts etc.

Again the address is http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving/giving_article.jsp?articleId=888.

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10. Fast Forward

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send it onto your friends and fellow community groups in your area. We would also like your input into this newsletter.

If you have any thoughts or any issues you would like addressed we would appreciate hearing from you. You can send your comments to brianw@ourcommunity.com.au or call (03) 9320 6813.

We now have button logos for those groups who want to set up links to www.ourcommunity.com.au from their own websites. You can find them in the media centre. Just visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/article/view_image_list.do and right click your mouse on the image you want and then click on SAVE to your own computer. If you have any problems just contact brianw@ourcommunity.com.au or call (03) 9320 6813.

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