

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

An alliance between Our Community, the Municipal Association of Victoria and Local Governments throughout the State of Victoria - Building Stronger Communities

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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. Our Community 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 donations service that has so far raised almost \$5 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 by emailing kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au

In this Issue

Contents

1. [Welcome from Rhonda Galbally, CEO of Our Community](#)
2. [Community Idol finalists announced!](#)
3. [Tax changes for not-for-profits](#)
4. [Why people leave country towns – and how to keep them connected](#)
5. [Save time and money with online banking](#)
6. [Great Australian Leaders in Focus: Neville Norman](#)
7. [Mission Impossible: defining what you do and why you do it](#)
8. [Hot funding opportunities](#)
9. ['Do not call' register imminent](#)
10. [Community Briefs](#)
11. [Community Jobs](#)
12. [Fast Forward](#)
13. [About Our Community](#)

1. Welcome by Rhonda Galbally AO, CEO of www.ourcommunity.com.au

Welcome to the latest edition of Our Community Matters, your free community sector update.

I had the pleasure and privilege last week of being part of the judging panel for the 2006 Westpac Community Idol competition, and what an inspiring – and highly challenging – task it was choosing between so many terrific entries. After much agonising we have finally selected three fantastic finalists and a list of 10 “highly commended” organisations. The groups we have chosen all provide an excellent example of functional, effective, inclusive and inspiring community organisations. But what pushed the three finalists over the line and cemented their spot as Community Idol finalists is their bravery. These are groups that are fighting for unpopular and difficult causes and in many cases pushing against accepted wisdom and practice. Community work that brings real, long-lasting changes to the world we live in is slow, hard and often very difficult. These groups are to be applauded for their willingness to take up the burden.

You can read more about the Community Idol finalists in **Part 2** of this newsletter, and those of you who are attending the **Communities in Control** conference later this month will get the chance to see these incredible groups in action and vote on the eventual winner. It’s a session you really won’t want to miss.

Another major event that has taken place in the past month was our inaugural Effective School Marketing conference, which I’m delighted to report was a resounding success. Thanks to all those who came to this event and took the time to provide such positive feedback on how you will use the information from the conference to build stronger schools. There will be more opportunities for learning coming up for community organisations and we’ll have more to reveal about this next edition.

Those groups who have online donations listed on our site will be pleased to hear that the end of financial year surge in giving is well and truly on, with donations pouring in during May. Donations last month were triple those at the same time last year and this is set to continue throughout June. Those who have appeals running should make sure you ramp up your fundraising efforts, that you have a link from your website directly to your Australian Giving Centre appeal page, and that you’ve included a link to your appeal with your email signatures and on all communication with supporters. The money’s sloshing around – make sure you capture some of it.

We have a couple of great diversity initiatives to highlight in this edition – if this is something your group is interested in (and it should be), make sure you don’t miss **Part 10** of this newsletter, which contains information about the Diversity@Work awards and a new publication on making your events more accessible.

Finally, I’d like to thank everyone who took the time to provide feedback on **Community Solutions** – the new suite of community sector banking products provided by Westpac. Groups have told us they’re very excited about these products, particularly the fee-free day-to-day account. Congratulations to Westpac again for making such a practical commitment to community.

RHONDA GALBALLY AO
Chief Executive Officer

P.S. Watch your email inboxes over the next week – there’s a special end-of-financial-year offer coming your way to thank you for your hard work in building a better community.

[Back to Top](#)

2. Community Idol finalists announced!

A group that supports training and jobs for a 5000-strong West Australian Indigenous community, a Victorian rural youth group that challenges homophobia, and a NSW refugee advocacy group have been selected as the finalists for the much-anticipated 2006 Westpac Australian Community Idol competition.

Selected from more than 300 entries, the three groups will strut their stuff before the 1500-strong crowd on the first day of the Communities in Control conference on Monday, June 19.

The audience members will then vote for the winner, which will be presented on day two of the conference by AFL legend Kevin Sheedy.

The winner will receive \$3000 courtesy of the competition sponsor, Westpac, the Idol trophy, a range of Our Community services and publications, a Westpac Beyond Survival financial management and development course valued at \$2000 – and of course the priceless Community Idol status.

The runners-up will receive a voucher to attend a Beyond Survival course, plus all current Our Community books and a 12-month subscription to all Our Community newsletters.

The 2006 finalists are:

1. **WayOut Rural Youth & Sexual Diversity Project** based in Kyneton, Victoria. WayOut is a youth-led group that is working to raise awareness in rural Victoria about sexual diversity and homophobia, and to redress the isolation and discrimination that same sex attracted young people face at school, at home and in the community. The group prides itself on being youth-driven and open to gay and straight members of the community.
2. **Sanctuary Refugee Foundation** based in Coffs Harbour, NSW. People from all walks of life have come together to form and run the Sanctuary Refugee Foundation to help refugees and promote understanding of their issues. The organisation ensures its funds go as far as possible by providing interest-free travel loans which are repaid then 'recycled' to help others in need. Sanctuary's work has inspired 10 new community groups across Australia. It receives no government funding.
3. **Wunan Foundation**, East Kimberley, WA. Wunan supports training, jobs and related activities for a 5000-strong Indigenous community in a region as big as the state of Victoria. It creates sustainable businesses itself, as well as providing management and governance support to other Indigenous groups to help them be more effective and sustainable in serving their local communities.

A further 10 groups were selected to receive Community Idol commendations. These are:

- Habitat for Humanity
- Awakenings Festival/Wimmera Uniting Care
- Park for Play
- Ballajura Youth and Community Venture Inc.
- West Kempsey Community Renewal Project
- Ravenswood Community Garden
- Gippsland Eating Disorder Network
- Melbourne Rainbow Band
- Ivanhoe Library
- Lead On Bendigo



The groups were chosen because they exemplify excellence in accessibility and diversity, governance, fundraising, partnerships, leadership, advocacy and community action.

The inaugural Community Idol competition was one of the highlights of the 2005 Communities in Control conference and this year's event promises to be just as inspiring.

This year's conference also includes a huge variety of speakers, including top-selling author Bryce Courtenay and International Pratt Fellow and world expert on community development for health and wellbeing, Professor Meredith Minkler. **Tickets are still available at www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic.**

A reminder also that the pre-conference **State of the Community** survey will remain open until noon next Wednesday, June 14. We want to know how your community organisation is travelling, how you think the community sector in general is going, and the issues you think are the most pressing in today's climate. Have your say now at www.ourcommunity.com.au/communitysurvey2006

[Back to Top](#)

3. Tax changes for not-for-profits

The May Federal Budget has made a number of small changes in tax law – some of which make life a bit easier for not-for-profits, some of which give more power to the Tax Office. The big decisions about systemic reform, however, are still being pushed away.

Tax deductibility for the donation of certain publicly listed shares

"The Government will allow taxpayers to claim a tax deduction for the donation to a deductible gift recipient (DGR) of publicly listed shares that have been held for at least 12 months and are valued at \$5000 or less. This measure will have effect from the first income year after the date of Royal Assent of the enabling legislation."

What this means

At the moment, you can donate shares to a DGR only in quantities over \$5000. This provision allows you to give smaller parcels.

As shares are so readily convertible into cash, this isn't going to make a great difference to most DGRs. Anybody who had wanted to donate \$1000 worth of shares could simply have sold them and passed on the \$990 (counting sales charge) to the organisation.

What the new under-\$5000 rule does make possible, however, is something along the lines of the UK's Sharegift, a scheme set up in 1996 to provide a charitable solution to the problem of unwanted small holdings of shares, particularly low value parcels that would cost more to sell than they're worth. ShareGift allows people to accumulate shares until they have enough for any given company to make them worth selling. Donors can suggest their favourite charities and this is taken into account when it comes to deciding who gets the money. As yet no Australian equivalent exists, but there seems an obvious opening.

Standardised compliance for deductible gift recipients (DGRs)

"The Government will extend the power of the Commissioner of Taxation to review the activities of specifically listed deductible gift recipients (DGRs) against the terms of their DGR status. This will take effect from the first income year after the date of Royal Assent of the enabling legislation.

"This measure will make specifically listed DGRs subject to the same review provisions as DGRs endorsed under the general DGR categories. The Government and the Parliament will retain the power to approve (or revoke) the status of specifically listed DGRs."

What this means

There are two types of DGRs; those that have proved to the ATO that they're public benevolent institutions, and those that have vaulted over this process and arranged to have the tax law amended to name them specifically. The ATO can, if it wants, check that the first kind of DGR isn't doing anything (as a primary activity) that's not DGR-compatible, such as advocacy. They haven't been able to investigate the second kind. Now they can.

The government has previously grumbled about the campaigns run by DGRs it considered outside the scope of charitable purposes; the Tax Office now has powers to investigate these activities. The ATO can't deregister a named organisation – the parliament put it into the Act, only the parliament can take it out – but this change may still act as a restraint on the kind of activities listed organisations can undertake.

Extending DGR

The Budget didn't touch one of the most important aspects of what's amiss with our present system – the narrow and many would say outmoded definition of a 'charity' and the exclusive and highly inconsistent way DGRs are defined and designated.

The government has, however, finally moved to implement its promise to extend the categories of DGR to cover war memorials, disaster relief, animal welfare, charitable services and educational scholarships.

Any group with any of these objectives that has not yet gained DGR status should send in another application immediately.

[Back to Top](#)

4. Why people leave country towns – and how to keep them connected

In a recent edition of Our Community Matters we highlighted how building an alumni or "friends of" community for past members or supporters of your organisation could help to strengthen networks and connections and open up new areas of support.

This concept is now being applied even more widely – to entire communities.

In what is believed to be a world first, the Wheatbelt Area Consultative Committee, which covers an area of Western Australia twice the size of Tasmania and comprising 170 communities, has been working with Our Community and the 44 local shires to develop a survey to help create a better understanding of why people leave the area.

The new 'Exit Interview' asks people leaving the area questions about:

- Who and how many people are leaving
- What sort of skills the people leaving are taking with them
- Why they came to the area in the first place, why they're leaving and where they're going
- Whether services (or lack of) in the town influenced the decision to leave, and what would encourage them to return
- What they think the strengths/weaknesses of the community are.

The survey is designed to allow communities to compile real data on why people are leaving and thereby influence decision-making around the need for future services and facilities.

It is also designed to encourage people leaving the local area to maintain contact with local people and organisations and to one day, perhaps, return to the town.

Wheatbelt Area Consultative Committee Executive Officer Lisa Shreeve said it was imperative that small towns focussed not only on the people who continued to reside there, but also those who left.

"We can't lobby for better services and facilities if we only ask those who live here if they are happy with what they have got," she said.

"We need to know why people leave to see if there is an opportunity to provide the services and facilities they seek, which would keep them living in the Wheatbelt."

Results of the surveys in Wheatbelt shires will be forwarded to the Area Consultative Committee to allow it to compile a regional profile.

The survey has also been circulated among the national network of 56 Area Consultative Committees for use Australia-wide.

To find out more about the project, you can contact Lisa Shreeve on 0428 372 178. To download a copy of the Wheatbelt survey, go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/ExitSurvey.pdf

[Back to Top](#)

5. Save time and money with online banking – brought to you by Westpac

These days, online banking offers a genuinely cost-effective and time-saving method of conducting business. Security issues shouldn't stop your organisation adopting the technology, as Domini Stuart explains in the latest article on community group finances, prepared by our alliance partner, Westpac.

Online banking has been one of the real internet success stories. According to recent statistics, more than 75% of Australia's 8 million-plus internet users are participating in online banking. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals that in 2002 some 23% of all adults used the internet to pay bills or transfer funds.

Online banking has also become a way of life for organisations of all types and sizes. Secure enough to offer a genuine alternative to branch-based banking, online banking also has the added advantage of attracting lower bank charges when compared to similar branch-based transactions, with the convenience of being able to manage your finances whenever it suits you.

"Probably the most important benefit is being able to keep a close eye on what's happening in your organisation," says Michael Samarkos, Channel Manager of Westpac and Business Online. "The internet allows you to keep track of your cash flow – what's been paid, which cheques have cleared and your up-to-date account balance."

Online banking can also help to streamline fundamental procedures in your not-for-profit organisation, including:

- paying bills
- paying wages
- managing invoices
- transferring money between accounts
- researching interest rates and special products
- interacting with the tax office for payroll tax and GST.

The benefits of online transactions differ from one provider to another, and may include no monthly account service fees, no minimum transfer amounts (some maximum transfer amounts do apply), no requirements for minimum balance and no fixed investment terms, with the convenience of instant access to your funds through telephone and internet banking, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Using the internet can also save the time someone would normally spend physically going to a bank and standing in a queue.

If your organisation is new to online banking, the Australian Government educational website 'Online Banking for Beginners' (www.onlinebanking.org.au) is a good place to start. Along with information and tips, you'll find a banking simulation (Simbank) feature that allows you to practice everyday online banking transactions.

Staying secure

"Within your organisation, you have control over which levels of access apply to which levels of the organisation," says Samarkos. "For instance, 'no-value access' would allow someone to check whether a payment has been made, but not to move money out of the account."

Your bank or financial institution should offer industry-standard encryption, and some (including Westpac) offer a security 'token' that prevents money from being removed from your organisation's account(s) without verification.

There are also important steps you can take yourself to make sure online banking remains a positive experience.

You must be wary of 'phishers' – criminals who masquerade as representatives of legitimate organisations, often using bank logos and typefaces in an email in the hope of convincing you that you have received an official message. Phishers may say that someone is using your organisation's account illegally, tell you to click on a link in the email and then ask you to re-enter or update your PIN or log-on information for 'security' purposes.

If you do click through in response to these emails, you will find yourself in a site that looks very authentic – but any information you provide will be captured for fraudulent use.

Another trick is to try to persuade you to click on a link that installs a 'Trojan' virus. This is a computer program that can secretly record keystrokes, such as your organisation's passwords.

Losing your identity in a financial sense means that someone has stolen your name and other personal information. He or she can then use this false identity to open and close bank accounts, move money around, secure loans, obtain cash or make purchases.

Information doesn't have to come from the internet – bank statements, credit card transaction slips and bills can all provide the kinds of details a criminal needs to tap into your organisation's accounts.

Simple precautions

'Phishing' and identity theft may sound sinister, but they're very easy to avoid. The most important thing to remember is that no bank would ever ask for your log-in or credit card details over the phone or by email. No bank would ask you to click on a link in an email to get to an internet banking login page. And no bank would ever ask for your passwords.

If you're in any doubt as to the validity of any message or request your not-for-profit organisation receives, phone your bank to check.

Thousands of not-for-profit organisations are using online banking every day without a problem. A few simple precautions will enable you, your members and your donors to enjoy the benefits in safety.

For more financial literacy articles, help sheets and other banking and finance resources, visit the Community Financial Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/finance.

Staying safe online

- Never respond to an email, however authentic it looks, that asks for personal or financial information.
- If you do want to change or update your organisation's financial details, phone your bank or visit in person. Never send this kind of information in an email.
- Install reliable anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your computer and make sure it is continually updated.
- Establish what you should do in an emergency – for instance, who you should contact if you're worried your organisation might have become a victim of 'phishing' or identity theft.
- Look out for any unexplained transactions on your organisation's financial statements.
- Keep all of your organisation's financial documents in a secure place.
- Shred any documents that carry account or other secure information.
- Make sure that your mailbox is secure.
- Report anything suspicious, including any loss or theft of documents, to the police as quickly as possible.

[Back to Top](#)

6. Great Australian Leaders in Focus: Neville Norman

This month's Great Australian Leader in Focus is Neville Norman, Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Melbourne and a great speaker at last year's Communities in Control Conference, where he took an insightful look at economic trends and how they might impact on communities into the future. As well as his impressive credentials in economics, Assoc. Prof. Norman has a range of community connections, among them being a patron of Vision Australia for a number of years, and St Paul's Cathedral Appeal Fund.

Our Community: Who do you consider to be the three great leaders of our time?

Neville Norman:

1. Pete Estes – CEO GM USA (1977-1981)
 2. (Sir Roderick) Rod Carnegie – CEO CRA 1970s and 80s
 3. (Sir) Alex Broers – Vice-Chancellor, Cambridge Uni (2000-4)
- (I would not put one politician in the top 20!)

Our Community: What are the three attributes you would consider to be essential to a leader?

Neville Norman:

1. Fundamental commitment to one or two objectives that are beyond the capacity of almost everyone to achieve by themselves
2. Overt demonstration they are prepared to do everything they ask of others (some appear to have this and then fall from grace)
3. Fundamental love of what they do and people they do it to.

Our Community: What are the three greatest barriers to new leaders emerging in Australia?

Neville Norman:

1. Pop culture – impressed with froth and bubble, e.g. TV stars
2. Tall-poppy syndrome – dislike of those already successful, not necessarily in wealth terms, other than in sport
3. High marginal tax rates at lowish income levels

Our Community: What advice would you give to a potential leader to take them to the next stage? Please feel free to expand.

Neville Norman: Don't ever relax or give up what you believe in or how to sell it to what can be at times a silly society.

Our Community: Nature/nurture – are leaders born or bred?

Neville Norman: Seldom ever bred – attempt by "management schools" to create leaders is unconvincing. Sometime it takes a crisis to bring out innate leadership characteristics.

Our Community: Who have been your own leadership mentors and how did they assist in developing your own leadership style?

Neville Norman: Sir Henry Bolte, Davis McCaughey, Weary Dunlop, Dr John Cheffers, Franz Stamfl (the last two being sporting coaches and inspiring leaders).

For more community leadership wisdom, visit the Australian Community Leadership Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/leadership.

[Back to Top](#)

7. Mission Impossible: Defining what you do, and why you do it

An organisation without a clearly articulated vision and mission is like a ship without a rudder or a map; it's hard to find your destination if you don't know what that destination is, nor the easiest route to get there.

Most groups do in fact have a vision (the thing they want to achieve) and a mission (how they want to achieve it) but many fall down when it comes to articulating them.

A new report, *Mission Impossible*, compiled by the UK's nfpSynergy, provides just the antidote for this problem.

The report demonstrates the best and worst of not-for-profit organisations' visions, missions, values and straplines, providing a reference collection from more than 80 UK organisations, as well as a guide on how to compile or improve your own defining statements.

nfpSynergy identifies six elements which, when used effectively, can "showcase the dreams, character and direction" of an organisation that distinguish it from all others:

- **VISION** – An organisation's vision is its guiding star; it defines what the organisation believes in and the kind of world it wants to see created. A vision is not restricted by the organisation's role or capacity; in fact it is usually much bigger than what any individual organisation can achieve in isolation. It is a compelling description of what ultimate success looks like and should be challenging but achievable.

A good starting point when conceiving an organisational vision is to ask board/committee members and employees, "What sort of world would you create for our beneficiaries if you were handed a magic wand?"

"Our vision is of a society that promotes and protects good mental health for all, and that treats people with experience of mental distress fairly, positively, and with respect." (MIND)

- **PURPOSE** – If the vision is the overarching dream, the purpose is the specific part of the dream that the organisation hopes to make real. An organisation's purpose outlines why it was established in the first place and identifies the piece of the puzzle that it is trying to fill.

In determining organisational purpose, consider what contribution your organisation would like to make to its vision, what piece of the puzzle you are well-positioned to fill. Ask yourself, if you could look back in 20 years time, what would you like to have seen the organisation achieve?

"The Blue Cross is a registered charity which aims to ensure the welfare of companion animals by providing practical care, highlighting the benefits of companionship between animals and people, and promoting responsibility towards animals in the community." (Blue Cross)

- **MISSION** – If the vision defines the end point, and the purpose defines the specific part of the vision that the organisation is striving to fulfill, the mission operationalises the way in which the organisation plans to meet these overarching goals – it is the game plan, so to speak. The mission outlines the mechanisms through which strategic goals will be achieved and sets the boundaries for the organisation's activities. In this way, it guides operations on the ground and focuses the organisation's resources.

While an organisational vision may remain the same for years and even decades, the mission should be updated regularly to reflect new and improved mechanisms by which the organisation can achieve its purpose.

"The method of achieving the Aim of the Association is by providing an enjoyable and attractive scheme of progressive training, based on the Scout Promise and Law, and guided by adult leadership." (The Scout Association)

- **STRAPLINE** – The strapline is a short phrase or sentence which sums up the organisation – it highlights what makes the organisation special or unique and is a brief but powerful impression that the organisation wants its public to remember.

Imagine a strapline as the part of the iceberg that can be seen above the water – but supported and underpinned by the rest of the vision statement that usually can't be seen.

"Working to protect human rights worldwide." (Amnesty International)

- **VALUES & BELIEFS** – Values reflect the organisation's core ideology – they are the principles, standards and qualities that characterise the way in which an organisation conducts its work. Organisational beliefs are a statement of what the organisation believes or accepts to be true.

Like mission and vision, an organisation's values are often formally defined on paper. But the real work involves putting them into practice. Senior managers need to target and support behaviours and activities that exemplify the organisation's values.

"We value the family, in all its various forms, as a source of love and support for individuals and as the basis of a caring society. We believe all human beings are unique and have the potential for spiritual, moral and intellectual growth; and we should be ambitious for our children. We believe in partnerships between families and the services that support them." (NCH)

The report highlights examples of organisations getting it right and also contains a guide to creating a powerful vision and mission. It can be downloaded free (after registering) at www.nfpsynergy.net/freereports

[Back to Top](#)

8. Hot funding opportunities

Most readers of this newsletter would know that Our Community maintains the most up-to-date, most comprehensive grants database in Australia. Through this database we track thousands of grants being offered by local, state and federal governments, as well as the philanthropic and corporate sectors, keeping an eye on what's new, what's open, who can apply and how – and packaging it all up in our regular EasyGrants newsletter. Here are just a few of the programs we're currently tracking.

Putting on a festival?

If your group is involving in putting on a community festival, make sure you check out the Festivals Australia grants program.

Provided by the Federal Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA), the program provides grants in two streams – for large projects (more than \$12,000) and small projects (less than \$12,000).

Funds are allocated for exciting new projects which will add to the cultural program of a regular, ongoing festival or which enhance the local community's cultural image and sense of identity. Eligible organisations include local councils, cultural organisations and regional arts councils.

The program is open until July 17, 2006 and more information is at www.dcita.gov.au/festivals.

Need money for training?

For community organisations looking for opportunities to get funding for training and conferences, software solutions company Advanced Solutions International (ASI) might have just the program.

ASI has created the 'Smart Company' Scholarship Fund to encourage the professional education of people working in the not-for-profit sector in Australia and New Zealand.

Up to \$20,000 (up to \$2000 per individual) is available in scholarships and education subsidies for study that is directly relevant to the applicant's professional education in the not-for-profit sector.

Applications close on June 10. Visit www.advsol.com/ap/scholarships for more information.

Want to attract new volunteers?

The Victorian Volunteer Small Grants program is designed to help Victorian organisations extend local volunteering opportunities and attract new volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

The program has been around for a while for new initiatives to widen volunteering, but eligibility has just been widened to allow small community organisations to apply for funding of projects **that improve their capacity to manage, develop and maintain existing volunteer programs.**

Up to \$5000 per grant is available under the program, which aims to increase diversity among Victoria's volunteers and within Victoria's volunteer organisations.

Applications can be lodged at any time and will be assessed within two months. More information and application forms are online at www.grants.dvc.vic.gov.au

This is just a small selection of the funding opportunities available to not-for-profit organisations around Australia. To find out more about our EasyGrants newsletter and database call us on (03) 9320 6800 or go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/easygrants.

[Back to Top](#)

9. 'Do not call' register imminent

As we reported last month, the Federal Government is planning to introduce a "do not call" register to protect people from nuisance telemarketing calls.

That register is now even closer to becoming a reality, with the Federal Government now having introduced to parliament the Do Not Call Register Bill.

While welcomed by many private citizens, it was originally feared that the register could interfere with the fundraising of Australian not-for-profit groups, many of whom rely heavily on asking for donations or selling raffle tickets over the phone.

However, the new bill makes it clear that charities will be exempt from the “do not call” provisions, which means that the register in fact contains some good news for not-for-profits – if all other phone appeals are restricted, the share of not-for-profit groups can be expected to increase.

It is worth noting, though, that at present this advantage is going to be available only to a narrow range of community groups. The exemptions from the Act are to apply only to charities: and by this the government does not mean ‘good not-for-profit causes’, which is how most lay people understand the term, but ‘charities’ in the technical legal meaning, which is much narrower.

Exemption from the do-not-call law is basically confined to the organisations that are now entitled to income tax exemption, who make up only a small proportion of Australia’s 700,000 community groups. Groups involved with advocacy, for example, are definitely denied the exclusion.

Admittedly, phone solicitation has always been of most value to those organisations that can offer tax deductibility for donations, but the proposed Act will give these groups a further advantage over their smaller brethren.

Any organisation that feels itself likely to be disadvantaged under this legislation should lose no time in contacting its parliamentary representatives.

[Back to Top](#)

10. Community Briefs

Awards reward diversity

Organisations that welcome and encourage the participation of people from many different backgrounds are already benefiting from all the things that diversity brings: more voices and thus better decision-making, a bigger and richer pool from which to draw talent, expanded networks, and better representation of – and thus responsiveness to – your stakeholders.

Now there is a chance to add one more benefit to that list – national recognition through the annual Diversity@work Awards.

Now in their sixth year, the Diversity@work Awards recognise and reward the efforts of individuals, teams and organisations that are working to encourage diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Awards will be made to small (up to 100 employees), medium (101-1000 employees) and large (more than 1000 employees) organisations in categories for diversity initiatives related to the employment and inclusion of:

- People with a disability
- Indigenous Australians
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Australians
- Mature Age Workers
- Work/Life Balance
- Victorian Grey Matters Employer Award (relating to initiatives for mature age workers, for Victorian entrants only)

An award will also be made to an individual who has initiated and championed diversity in their organisation. Nominations close at 5pm on Friday, August 11, 2006. Visit www.diversityatwork.com.au for nomination forms and more information.

Making your event more accessible

Any groups involved in holding fetes, conferences, festivals, fundraisers or events of any kind should take note of a great new guide on making events more accessible.

Accessible Events – A Guide for Organisers, has been developed by Meetings and Events Industry of Australia in partnership with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

The guide takes you through all aspects of event preparation, from selecting a venue, to transport considerations, promotion, bookings, catering and accommodation. It also provides a range of practical tips on

how to make events more accessible to people with disabilities, including how you can make written, visual and audio information accessible, as well as the legal responsibilities events organisers have under anti-discrimination law.

The guide points out that it's easier and cheaper to think about access at the very earliest planning stages of your event than to address them as an afterthought.

"The most effective way of ensuring access for everyone is to think about access at the very earliest planning stages of your event. This means thinking about the access requirements of attendees, staff, speakers, performers and exhibitors who may have a disability," the guide says.

"It will often be more expensive and more time consuming to address the requirements of people with disabilities if you treat access as something you add at a later stage."

The guide can be downloaded free at www.meetingevents.com.au/research/

Criminal record checks – what's fair?

As the Victorian Government's Working with Children measures start to come into effect, a western suburbs community lawyer has cautioned against the unfair use of background police checks.

The Working with Children check aims to protect children from harm by "checking a person's criminal history for serious sexual, violence or drug offences and findings from professional disciplinary bodies" – according to the state's Department of Justice.

The first series of checks – for foster carers and Department of Human Services' employees – are already under way. Future checks will include those that have contact with children within school, childcare, and childminding, religious, medical, club, community and other settings.

An interesting take on the new checks was raised in *The Age* newspaper recently by principal community lawyer at the Brimbank-Melton Community Legal Centre, Hugh de Kretser, who expressed concern that background checks are becoming more common and have the potential to cause discrimination.

"It is perfectly legitimate for a childcare centre to ensure that no staff have relevant sex offences. But it is unreasonable for a real estate agency to refuse to hire a receptionist because she was fined \$50 for using cannabis nine years ago," he wrote.

"A bank could refuse to hire someone with a recent fraud or dishonesty offence, but it would be unreasonable for a supermarket to dismiss a shelf-stacker because the criminal record check revealed a drunk and disorderly conviction six years ago.

"Prohibiting unreasonable criminal record discrimination is all about striking the right balance between the risk of re-offending and the ability of former offenders to rehabilitate. At present, the odds are stacked against anyone with a criminal record."

Mr de Kretser said criminal record information was not always a reliable indicator of future behavior – and became less reliable the longer the crime-free period since the last offence.

"We need to get the balance right to promote attempts by offenders to rehabilitate and gain employment, while protecting against the risk of re-offending when the criminal record is clearly relevant to genuine requirements of a job," he said. "There is an urgent need for Victoria to introduce laws prohibiting unreasonable criminal record discrimination."

Dealing with complaints

Having an effective complaints management system in place is a proven way of maintaining better relationships with the people on whom your organisation depends, a UK report has concluded.

Cause for Complaint? How Charities Manage Complaints about their Services presents the findings of the UK Charity Commission's research into how not-for-profit organisations deal with complaints.

The report says there is no 'one size fits all' approach to setting up an effective complaints procedure, however some of the key features include:

- Ensuring there is a **clear definition** of what you will regard as a complaint, as not everyone will state overtly that they are making a complaint.

- Ensuring all staff and volunteers who may receive or deal with complaints get **adequate training** in complaints handling.
- **Providing support** for all those involved in complaints and their management, including both complainants and those complained about. Making a complaint can be stressful, tiring and time-consuming; equally, being the focus of a complaint can be stressful, upsetting and anxiety-provoking.
- Ensuring the complaints procedure is adequately **publicised and accessible** to anyone.
- Ensuring complaints are **effectively managed**. Multi-stage procedures can be helpful, as can an inbuilt use of an independent person or organisation. A swift response, acknowledgment of the complaint and telling the complainant how and when it will be dealt with will help to manage the complainant's expectations.
- Knowing where and **how to stop** dealing with the complaint; a complaints procedure can help demonstrate that the organisation has taken all reasonable steps to deal with the complaint fairly and is justified in taking no further action.
- Ensuring the organisation benefits by **learning from complaints** and using the information it gleanes to reflect on and improve its services.

The full report, including best practice examples of complaints procedures in practice, is online at <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/rs11.asp>

Australians healthier, wealthier and wiser ... but is life better?

Australians are living longer, are more educated and have more income to spend, according to the latest edition of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Measures of Australia's Progress, released on May 31.

The report – the third in a series which began in 2002 – looks at a range of factors which influence Australia's progress, and aims to present them in a way which allows readers to make up their own minds on whether life is getting better.

The latest report indicates a number of trends across a wide range of areas, including:

- Children born in 2004 will live two to three years longer than those born 10 years earlier. However Indigenous Australians' life expectancies remain well below those of other Australians.
- 58% of Australians aged between 25 and 64 have vocational or higher education qualification, a jump of 12% since 1995.
- Australia's real net national disposable income per capita grew by around 3.0% a year between 1994-95 and 2004-05. Between 1994-95 and 2003-04, the real income of people described as "less well-off" Australians and those in the "middle" income group grew by 22%.
- National productivity has risen by 1.3% per year between 1994-95 and 2004-05.
- "Personal crimes", particularly assaults, increased from 4.8% to 5.3% between 1998 and 2005. However, the number of "household crimes" – actual or attempted break-ins to cars and houses - fell from 8.3% to 6.2%.
- Available data points to a decrease in biodiversity in Australia during the past decade, with more bird and animal species endangered. However land clearance – a factor contributing to biodiversity decline – decreased by 38% between 1993 and 2003.
- Available data points to a decline in the quality of some of Australia's waterways. Australia's air remains pretty clean by world standards, with available indicators pointing to an improvement in quality over the past 10 years. Australia's total net greenhouse gas emissions in 2003 were up 1% on 1990 levels.

No new detailed data is presented under the Community and Social Cohesion Category – which looks at areas surrounding community connection, social participation, volunteering and donating.

The report can be downloaded for free from the ABS site at www.abs.gov.au

'No-strings income' worth more

A new UK survey has found that many organisations would gladly sacrifice some of their income if that meant they would have more control over how the funds were spent.

Research carried out by nfpSynergy found that 57% of organisations believe £1 of unrestricted funding is worth £2 of restricted funding. Forty-two per cent said they would happily trade in a £1 million restricted grant for less than £600,000 of unrestricted income to be spent as they, rather than their funders, choose.

Nine out of 10 organisations said they wanted to increase their percentage of unrestricted income, and nearly three-quarters admitted that they struggled to obtain the level of unrestricted funding they needed.

"A higher level of unrestricted funds is crucial for the vision, direction and development of a voluntary organisation," said one respondent. Another said their organisation was often unable to find funding programs whose criteria matched its work.

Steven Burkeman, a consultant at the Community Fund, urged funders to respond to the need for more 'no-strings' sources of income.

"I feel very strongly that funders should pay attention to this," he said. "It's not that charities want to splash money around, but they want to fund their core operations, such as computers and offices and all the unglamorous stuff without which nothing else can happen. At the moment they are stuck between a rock and a hard place."

Joe Saxton, co-founder of nfpSynergy, said: "Unrestricted funding puts you in control. Organisations are fed up with having to torture their work to fit funders' demands. How do we put organisations on an even financial keel? Part of it is full cost recovery, part of it is ensuring they can cover core costs from unrestricted funding."

Nominations open for research prize

Nominations are open for the US Independent Sector's 2006 Virginia A. Hodgkinson Research Prize.

The prize recognises outstanding published research that fosters the understanding of philanthropy, voluntary action, charitable organisations, and civil society in the United States and around the world.

Australians are eligible for nomination for the prize, which is awarded to researchers and practitioners who work in or with the voluntary sector and through their work have achieved local, national, or international impact and recognition. The research article, report or book must have been published within the last three calendar years.

Nominations close June 30 and more information can be found at www.independentsector.org/programs/research/vah_research_prize.html

Quest for Life wins \$5000 marketing prize

The Quest for Life Foundation, a NSW-based organisation that assists people dealing with trauma, has received \$5000 worth of marketing help from Australia Post after winning the most recent round of the Marketing, Media & Post Centre competition.

The Bundanoon-based not-for-profit organisation can use the \$5000 prize either as a refund on postage costs for a direct mail campaign, or in the form of services of a professional marketing consultant to help with their next campaign.

Quest for Life won the prize after providing feedback about how they had used the resources at the Marketing, Media and Post Centre at

www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapost.

This is a fantastic resource, which has been developed by Our Community and Australia Post to provide ideas, inspiration and practical tools to help community groups spread the word about their great work.

The competition is designed to help Australia Post and Our Community make the centre as user-friendly, practical and relevant to community groups as possible.



Quest for Life Business Development Manager Kate vanderVoort (pictured at right with Australia Post Manager Marketing Communications, Peter Donadel, left, and Mail Marketing Consultant Michael Durie) said the organisation had found the **Images, Ideas and Layout** section of the site particularly useful, along with the **help sheets** on planning and creating direct mail campaigns.

Quest for Life also uses the **Charity Mail** function, which allows community organisations to obtain lower prices for bulk mail lodgements.

Another \$5000 is up for grabs this quarter – and entering is as easy as visiting the Marketing, Media & Post Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapost, checking out the free resources there, and telling us what you thought of them.

[Back to Top](#)

11. Community Jobs

A selection of community jobs from Our Community's latest *Good Moves* newsletter:



NSW

Job Title	Organisation	
Lifeline's Suicide Crisis Support Program Coordinator	Lifeline South Coast	Details
Lifeline's Just ask Service Coordinator	Lifeline South Coast	Details
Grants, Awards & Sponsorship Co-ordinator	City of Canada Bay Council	Details

QLD

Job Title	Organisation	
Education Advocate/Case Manager	Cape York Partnerships	Details
Instructional Designer	Cape York Partnerships	Details
Team Facilitator	Cape York Partnerships	Details

VIC

Job Title	Organisation	
Administrative Assistant	Philanthropy Australia	Details
Development, Acquisition and Partnership Manager	YMCA	Details
Board Technical Director	Common Equity Housing Ltd.	Details
Board Technical Director	Common Equity Housing Ltd.	Details
Graduate Trainee	International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)	Details

www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs

www.ourcommunity.com.au - Good Moves Newsletter

Your best choice to find and advertise a job



12. Fast Forward

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send it onto your friends and fellow community groups in your area.

If you would like to reproduce anything in this newsletter in your own newsletters or websites, you are free to do so. Please just add a small credit line, "courtesy of www.ourcommunity.com.au" and a direct link to the www.ourcommunity.com.au site if on a web page.

13. About Our Community

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise providing:

1. www.ourcommunity.com.au - Australia's most useful website and publishing house, encompassing the nation's largest and most diverse membership base and 15 knowledge and service hubs - accelerating the impact of Australia's 700,000 community organisations
2. [Australian Institute for Community Practice and Governance](#) - practical and accessible certificated training delivered locally through our training Institute
3. [Centre for Best Practice in Grantmaking](#) - the unique suite of grantmaking services for government
4. [Centre for Community-Business Partnerships](#) - cutting edge Corporate Social Responsibility resources for large, medium and small business and community organisations

Our Community's website currently consists of 15 major Centres of Excellence.

Make a Difference

- [Australian Giving Centre](#): Helping Individuals and Workplaces Give in Every Way
- [Centre for Community-Business Partnerships](#): Connect, Make a Difference and Form a Partnership
- [Boards, Committees & Governance Centre](#): Build a Better Board; Be a Better Board Member; and Find a Board Position

Find & Manage Money

- [Community Funding Centre](#): Helping all Community Groups and Schools Find Money
- [Community Financial Centre](#): Banking Solutions and Services
- [Centre for Best Practice in Grantmaking](#): Achieving Best Practice with Grants, Awards and Scholarship Programs

Build Capacity

- [Marketing, Media & Post Centre](#): Delivering Better Results for Community Groups
- [Australian Institute of Community Practice & Governance \(AICPG\)](#): The A-Z of Training & Resources for Managing Community Groups
- [Leadership Centre](#): Community Groups Can Do: Leadership
- [Communities in Control](#): Giving Voice – and Support – to Grassroots Community Groups
- [Jobs / Recruitment](#): The First Place for Good Moves in the Community Sector
- [Centre for What Works](#): The First and Best Place for Community

Buy Supplies & Be Informed

- [Community Marketplace](#): Providing all Community Groups with Excellent Value Products and Services
- [Insurance & Risk Management Centre](#): Helping Community Groups Manage Risk & Get Insurance
- [TechCommunity Centre](#): Technology Resources and Services for Community Groups
- [Calendar of Key Events](#): Listing of nationally significant events

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[Back to Top](#)



Looking for an easier way to manage your banking?

Introducing Westpac Business Online.

When time and funds are tight it's essential to manage your finances as efficiently as possible. That's why Westpac Business Online is ideal for not-for-profit organisations. As part of the Westpac Community Solutions Package, it provides a secure and seamless way for you to conduct your banking whenever and wherever it suits you. You can use it to check account balances, make online payments, access helpful tools and resources for managing your banking, and much more. Westpac Business Online can also help you save on fees and charges, which means more time and money can go towards achieving your organisation's mission.

To find out more about Westpac Business Online please call 1300 660 953 or take the test drive at www.westpac.com.au/business

Westpac

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