

Business Community Intelligence

**Smarter Business
Better Communities**

The Australian Best Practice
Newsletter for Corporate Social
Responsibility and Business &
Community Partnerships

- ✓ Ideas
- ✓ Insights
- ✓ Information
- ✓ What works and what doesn't

A Newsletter for People Who Invest in Communities

[July 2005]



ourcommunity.com.au

Deloitte.



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Dr Annie Duncan has spent most of her professional career teaching and researching at Universities in Australia and overseas. She was CEO of science centres in WA and Canberra and was on the International Board of the Association of Science-Technology Centers.

In her “other“ life she has been on the Boards of many not-for-profits in WA, Canberra and Victoria. In WA these included the State Training Board, State Employment and Skills Development Authority, Museums Australia, Family Planning and Women’s Economic Development Organisation. In the ACT Annie chaired the R&D Grants Committee for the Territory Government, SHFPACT and the Cancer Council.



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Our Community is the national gateway for Australia’s 700,000 community groups and schools. Through the Our Community Centres of Excellence, we provide the one-stop-gateway for practical resources, support and linkages between community networks and the general public, business and government - building capacity to strengthen the community in every Australian State and Territory.



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- 5 CSR - in perspective**
Competition and compassion – ACCC Chairman GRAEME SAMUEL argues that businesses need to find compassion or face Government regulating it for them.
- 11 Waking with Dinosaurs on Planet Community** – Community is not a distant planet and it's time many senior executives realised that, says Sussans Property Group director, CAROL SCHWARTZ.
- 14 Cover Story - Is corporate volunteering falling short?**
Australian companies spend millions of dollars on corporate volunteering. But is it delivering value for money for both the business and community?
- 28 At a Glance - Best practice in Corporate Volunteering at a glance.**
- 30 Deloitte thought leadership - Volunteering for change.**
Establishing a corporate social responsibility program, is one thing but living and breathing it is another writes TONI HAMILTON, Director of Special Projects for Deloitte Australia.
- 34 For good measure** – Weighing up the cost of a good reputation. DR ANNIE DUNCAN examines the reputation indexes that are judging a company's corporate standing.
- 38 Banking on Success - Westpac counts the benefits of CSR.**
- 40 By the numbers** – Building the case for corporate volunteering.
- 43 Inside government**
Bringing domestic violence out of the shadows and into a CSR focus- Brisbane City Council.
- 46 Nation's Top Community Business Partnerships Recognised.**
- 48 Knowledge Bank - Carrying the Standard for CSR.**
- 50 The ethical dilemma**
Home or Away? The experts look at where should your donations go.
- 53 The CEO on CSR** – MICHAEL CHANEY, CEO Wesfamers and one of the nation's most active promoters and initiator of CSR talks to Dr Annie Duncan.
- 55 What's New – Promoting individual and business involvement.**
- 57 In Focus** – Looking at a project that gets little corporate support but makes a big impact on local lives.
- 59 Outside the square**, Encouraging CSR managers to look “outside the square” for ideas, projects and partners that might be worth of consideration.
- 64 Resources** – Where to get help about corporate volunteering?
- 67 Take 10** – The top 10 discussion starters. We look at some of the issues contained in this newsletter and pose the questions to kick off discussions in your office.

Welcome to Business Community Intelligence – Smarter Business, Better Communities – an initiative that is borne of an idea to ensure that the “win-win-win” situation for companies, non-profit partners and the community generally is just that – a win for all.

The words Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) resonate strongly through the business world. Some companies are taking the principles of CSR and seeking to embed them in their corporate DNA so the values that they show to the world are also the values that guide all their decision-making.

Let’s face it, even those companies that don’t really care much for CSR and are happy to question whether it’s really doing at all, still find space in their annual reports and corporate profiles to paper over their “community activities.”

We believe in CSR. Wholeheartedly. But we also believe in a type of CSR that is built on a relationship of recognising the needs of the company and also the needs of the community group. CSR is not about charity. It is not about doing good. It is about working in partnership with the community and community groups to achieve common goals. Goals that are difficult to achieve alone and can only be achieved by both parties working together. This edition looks primarily at staff volunteering during working hours.

This newsletter is aimed at promoting an ongoing discussion and occasional debate around some of the core issues around CSR. It is trying to look beyond the day-to-day news stories and announcements and to seek to unravel some of the magic, mysteries

and myths about being good corporate citizens. We will try to take some of the experiences of people in the field and use it to inform others and to help corporates make good, sensible, informed decisions on the type of initiatives and the range of partners they select.

Business Community Intelligence is an idea that has bubbled around and eventually come to life. It is also an evolving idea that will change to meet the needs of those people in corporate life as – indeed – the face of CSR continues to change and evolve.

This edition looks primarily at the issue of volunteering because it is an area that is common to many top 500 companies who either have formal management-driven schemes or informal staff-driven initiatives.

And staff play an increasingly greater role in this area. It is no longer a case of management mandate saying “we should do this” but staff demanding to know “Why aren’t we doing this?”

We hope Business Community Intelligence is a tool that can be used to build better CSR programs and better communities. But that it can also assist in building a more connected workforce and one that can see a direct link between the health of the company and the health of the communities in which they live and operate.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and look forward to hearing your comments, your thoughts and also your ideas and suggestions.

Dr Annie Duncan
Editor-in-Chief



Dr Annie Duncan

Competition and compassion – key ingredients needed to build an economy.

As chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, GRAEME SAMUEL is well-known as a proponent of a market economy. But in his speech to the Australian Davos Connection's Future Summit conference, he outlined that it was not about corporate social responsibility but corporate social sensibility. In the real politic either businesses moved to reflect the needs of the community – or face the prospect of governments intervening to address the community's needs through regulatory requirements.

The most recent OECD economic survey of Australia, released in February, declared that in “the last decade of the 20th century Australia became a model for other OECD countries”.

The survey found Australia's competition and financial reform had given us the second highest growth in the OECD over the last 13 years and allowed us to withstand the effects of financial crises abroad and the drought at home.

It is a report card which confirms that the sacrifices which went into stripping back protection and making all sectors of the Australia economy more competitive have, for the most part, been worth it.

For more than a decade now Australia has experienced consistent strong rates of economic growth.

Unemployment is at a 20 year-low, interest rates remain close to the lowest levels in over 30 years, and we have seen the unprecedented development of:

- High value, sophisticated professional services in the areas of health, education and the law, including the export of those services;
- A dynamic tourism industry;
- The production of high quality food

and drink, such as high quality wine (rather than more of the same, old, tired thing);

- The provision of consumer choice: of goods and services that consumers actually want – at a time they want it, and;
- The supply of innovative personal services, which improves the quality of life of consumers.

This has not come about by chance.

It is the results of over two decades of work to make the Australian economy more flexible, more productive, and more resilient.

Spurred by innovations in communications, financial services and information-based technologies, Australian firms now compete against the rest of the world. Our markets are no longer sheltered by barriers of information and distance; with the integration of markets, world's best practice is the new benchmark for efficient supply.

Sharper competition, a greater openness to trade, investment and technology, and increased business flexibility have boosted Australian productivity.

The removal of impediments to growth and competition allowed Australia to



Graeme Samuel

Graeme Samuel AO was appointed acting chairperson of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission on 1 July 2003, and then chairperson for a five year term commencing 1 August 2003.

Before joining the ACCC, Mr Samuel was president of the National Competition Council for six years. He was executive director of Macquarie Bank from 1981–86. His career as a banker was preceded by 12 years as a partner of leading Melbourne law firm Phillips Fox and Masel. He has held several other offices, including chair of the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust, commissioner of the Australian Football League and member of the Docklands Authority.

He was a trustee of the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust, president of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and chair of the Inner and Eastern Health Care Network.

Mr Samuel was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1998.

[CSR - in perspective]

Competition and compassion – key ingredients needed to build an economy.

[continued from previous page]

reap the benefits of global change. I think most people now agree that Australia's remarkable resilience during the Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s had much to do with the leaner, more flexible economy that had developed as a result of wide-ranging micro economic reform.

But as impressive as these results are, economists and policy makers acknowledge that there is still a way to go. We know that economic reform has generated clear public benefit. Our challenge is to ensure it continues so that we can maintain high levels of economic growth and create more and better jobs.

Although policy inertia might temporarily delay economic pain and uncertainty, the clear evidence is that economies that fail to adapt, and adapt again, and then readapt are punished, most profoundly, by their own deadweight.

Not just reform for reform's sake

Now, I do not claim here that every proposal for reform that improves business competitiveness is desirable, or that every suggestion by an economist should be given credence.

It is true that competition will generally improve economic efficiency and community welfare. But this does not mean that considerations of equity, which sometimes are to be addressed at the cost of efficiency, should be ignored.

Nor does it mean that the benefits of reform will never be outweighed by associated costs, or that market failure

does not exist or that it never warrants regulation by governments.

So an important task for governments is to determine whether or not economic reform brings a net community benefit, and is not just reform for the sake of reform.

In doing this, governments must consider an array of community interest matters, including the environment, employment, social welfare, regional development and consumer interests as well as business competitiveness and economic efficiency.

The challenge for governments is to focus on outcomes that benefit the community as a whole, rather than providing special treatment for certain groups at the expense of consumers generally. At the same time, the impacts of reform on the individuals, regions and industries directly exposed to reform must be taken into account. It is also important that any trade-offs between the interests of different groups are made explicit so that governments can objectively consider the case for adjustment assistance to those who bear the costs of reform.

The biggest losers from change – people who have lost their traditional livelihood – can suffer swiftly and severely, and are often able to mobilise opposition to further change.

Against this, the beneficiaries of change and reform are millions of consumers who gain access to lower prices and better services. The beneficiaries also include producers whose input costs are lowered through reform, and people who find employment in the industries that grow off the back of these changes.

[csr in action]

Companies:

Roche Pharmaceutical, Myer Melbourne

Non-Profit partner:

Guide Dogs Victoria

Activity:

Sponsorship of a living display in Myer windows to help celebrate International Guide Dog Day and remind passers by that by law, guide dogs are allowed to 'Access All Areas' including restaurants, supermarkets and public transport including planes and taxis.

[CSR - in perspective]

Competition and compassion – key ingredients needed to build an economy.

[continued from previous page]

Given that the benefits to each individual may be relatively small, may flow through in the longer run rather than immediately, or may be too remote from the original cause for a link to be obvious, it's not surprising that we don't see street rallies demanding change and reform.

But the silence of the majority can give opponents of change considerable leverage in mobilising public and political opinion against change. This only adds to misinformation and confusion in the community that globalisation is a new and corrosive phenomenon – rather than a new stage in a process that has been evolving for centuries. And factors like immigration, international trade and policies of economic reform become scapegoats for the fallout from change, when in fact they are helping Australia capture the benefits of global change.

What this means is that a society that relies purely on market forces to distribute the benefits of change will inevitably sow the seeds for polarisation and resentment. Ultimately, this feeds into social dislocation and political instability.

So on the one hand we are presented with a community need and desire for increased fairness. But on the other, the imperatives to maintain or improve our economic performance remain.

The need to foster fairness does not mean that we should divert from a commitment to sound economic reform. After all, as I have indicated earlier, most reforms that improve our economic prosperity will also improve fairness. And there are often smarter ways of achieving fairness than cutting back on economic reforms that have

some adverse side-effects for fairness. We need soft hearts, certainly, but we also need hard heads.

Helping people adjust to change must become an integral part of reform. It is imperative not just on moral and equity grounds, but to help communities feel more optimistic about their ability to adapt in a world where ongoing change is a part of life. Perhaps, most important of all, sensible change management ensures that people don't feel that they have been forgotten or discarded by the rest of the community.

Critically, governments must not undermine the incentives to create and innovate, for these are the very generators of wealth. The best safety net of all is a strong economy able to provide jobs. And while traditional safety nets such as social security, public health and education are important, what is also needed, in the face of rapid change, are opportunities for people to adapt so that they can play an active role in the dynamics of change.

In all of this, what then is the role of business?

Now many in business take the position that business responsibility should remain focused exclusively on returns to shareholders - that the social responsibility of directors and executives is discharged if they contribute towards the operation of a vibrant business sector. The corollary of such an opinion is that governments alone should look to concerns of justice and "social legislation".

But business does not operate in glorious commercial isolation. Business, whether it realises it or not - whether

[csr in action]

Company:

Cadbury Schweppes

Non-Profit partner:

The Humour Foundation

Activity:

Sponsorship of Smile Day, on April Fool's Day, which raises funds for Clown Doctors to bring smiles to the faces of children in hospital.

[CSR - in perspective]

Competition and compassion – key ingredients needed to build an economy.

[continued from previous page]

it wants it or not - exists as a full participant in the Australian community and has a responsibility to develop a social sensibility. Business needs to be aware of community expectations, for it is those expectations that, if they are not met, can cause governments to introduce new laws which may hamper the capacity of business to act in the best interest of its shareholders

What does this mean in practice?

In the first instance, I think it demands of business a sensibility and responsiveness for those actions that have pervasive impacts on the community.

I am wary about describing this as a corporate social responsibility. The very use of the expression “responsibility” raises an inherent conflict with the legal responsibilities of directors to act in the interests of shareholders. We therefore end up with a legal debate that tends to divert attention away from the fundamental message – that there is a community expectation that business will act with a sensibility and responsiveness for its actions that impact on the community.

Corporate social sensibility is a business imperative as well as an altruistic nicety. It is not so much about cheques as it is about attitudes, social involvement, and sensible, socially responsive business management.

A business community that abjures social sensibility runs the risk that governments will intervene to address the community’s needs through regulatory requirements. This is the nature of the government beast, and is not without significant cost.

My late father in law, a property investor, used to say in relation to his tenants, that if you squeezed the orange too hard you would get the pip.

It’s an analogy that I believe applies to all areas of life, and in particular, business and the way it conducts its relations with its suppliers, its competitors and its customers.

To paraphrase my father-in-law, if you squeeze the shareholder wealth orange too much to get every last ounce of juice out of it, then there’s a risk that business will end up with the pip of a community backlash.

Let me emphasise - this is not a discussion about corporate social responsibility. Rather it is inviting business to consider the real politic of the political environment in which business operates.

One has only to look at the increasing level of regulation relating to the environment and occupational health and safety and demands for regulatory requirements covering executive salaries and other issues of corporate governance. In each case, governments are being asked to respond to a perceived default by business in addressing social needs or community concerns and expectations, or assisting the community to adapt to decisions made by business in response to inevitable economic technological and social change.

I do not say here that business decisions should be guided entirely, or even significantly, by social considerations. Indeed, the capacity of business to generate national wealth derives significantly from its ability to respond

[csr in action]

Companies:

Burgen, Saxbys Soft Drinks, Paper Print Logistics

Non-Profit partner:

Diabetes Australia

Activity:

Sponsorship of The Great Australian Bite, in which Australians are encouraged to gather for a ‘bite’ to eat with family, friends or workmates anytime during April and make a donation to raise money for diabetes awareness, research, education programs and advocacy services.

[CSR - in perspective]

Competition and compassion – key ingredients needed to build an economy.

[continued from previous page]

quickly to market conditions.

I am therefore very cautious about embracing notions of triple bottom line reporting or ethical investment guidelines. It seems to me that these notions run the risk of providing simplistic legal challenges for corporate boards and management that inevitably will lead to a diversion from fundamental principles of good business management and to a box-ticking mentality. This would contradict the attitudinal and behavioural mindset that is appropriate to the values that I have described earlier.

Ultimately the business leaders who best respond to this challenge will find that their business success significantly reflects the sensibility and responsiveness of their relationship with the broader community.

Key themes in managing reform

Three key themes emerge when dealing with the question of how best to implement and manage economic reform.

The first is that we cannot avoid change.

As a small trading nation in a changing world, dependent on trade to maintain our living standards, it is simply unrealistic to cut ourselves adrift from the rest of the world. In our circumstances, change is a reality, not an option. We can tackle it or let it tackle us. We therefore need to ease and facilitate change, and address real and tangible social costs.

It would be both unfair and ultimately

self-defeating to seek to halt the process of reform indefinitely: because sheltering one area of the community from the realities of change simply shifts the costs to other people and ultimately makes us all poorer. We would avoid change only at a greater cost to our own future.

The second point is that there are few straightforward answers. When it comes to change, there will always be differences of opinion on what is the best way to deal with it - what is the best course of action to take.

This implies that before we endeavour to implement change, we must recognise that other sections of the community may not share our views.

The approach to any problem must recognise and reflect the interests of all elements of the community, individually and collectively, rather than the narrow interests of a reform proponent. Why should anyone support, or even acquiesce to, a reform measure that involves no apparent benefits and perhaps a few risks? Ideally everyone is a winner. Or, more realistically, there are substantially more winners than losers. And even the losers can be shown to have been treated fairly and equitably.

And this leads to the third and final point - the importance of addressing fairness, as well as economic prosperity, when considering government policy. We need to recognise and address the trade-offs that will sometimes emerge between fairness and prosperity objectives, and ensure that we choose the right policy mechanisms to pursue these community goals.

[csr in action]

Companies:

State Street

Non-Profit partner:

*Oxfam Community Aid
Abroad*

Activity:

Principal sponsor of the 2005 Oxfam Trailwalker events. With the support of State Street, Oxfam Community Aid Abroad has to date, raised over \$1 million through the Melbourne Trailwalker event, where, in April, more than 1600 people walked or ran 100kms within 48 hours through Victorian bushland.

[CSR - in perspective]

Competition and compassion – key ingredients needed to build an economy.

[continued from previous page]

Sharing the benefits of reform in the community

I fervently believe that competition is crucial to the economic well-being of this nation, and the quality of life for all Australians.

I fervently believe that the opening up of our economy has likewise delivered genuine and ongoing benefits to this nation, and that if we wish to maintain those benefits we must continue to reform.

I fully recognise that every reform has to be judged on its merits and on its benefits to the whole community – the public. And that many reforms that proceed on the basis of net community benefit will impose costs on some members of the community.

It is therefore incumbent on those who are the beneficiaries of reform to ensure that the benefits are, as far as possible, spread around the community.

Only by ensuring that the benefits that flow from a more open and competitive economy are spread to all, will community support continue for the changes that are needed for our economy to continue provide the profits, jobs and continuing improvements in living standards.

Business does not operate in isolation and whether it wants it or not - exists as a full participant in the Australian community.

So I say to business – the choice is yours. Continue the relentless pursuit of profits and shareholder wealth without regard to community concerns and expectations and you will be left with the

pip – government regulation.

Or, listen to the community, become a full player in Australian society and take control of your own destiny. ■

[they said]

“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.”

*Warren Buffet
Chairman
Berkshire Hathaway*

[CSR - in perspective]

[1]

Waking with Dinosaurs on Planet Community.

[highpoint property group](#)

There are still some companies that talk of the community as a distant planet to be visited only with photographer in tow and annual report in mind. CAROL SCHWARTZ, the director of the Highpoint Property Group and chair of Our Community says that community is much closer than some executives think. Here are her thoughts on business and the community as outlined to the Australian Davos Connection's Future Summit conference.

FIFTEEN years ago, businesses that had a defined, detailed and displayed corporate social responsibility strategy were few and far between. They were either viewed as visionary leaders or misguided nutters who were finding yet another way to fritter away shareholder profits.

Today few companies in the ASX Top 200 would put out an annual report without a section devoted to their activities in the community. Some have executives whose role it is to oversee the CSR activities. Some have whole departments and some devote millions of dollars. It is now big business within business yet the debate still burns on whether it should be a central activity of business.

We have a number of different measures of corporate social responsibility such as Reputex and the Corporate Responsibility Index. A Google search reveals in excess of one and a half million sites containing mentions of corporate social responsibility.

Even a survey of 1500 delegates to the recent Davos conference found that 5 per cent nominated CSR as the most important measure of corporate success while a further 24 per cent nominated the reputation and integrity of the brand. Less than 20 per cent nominated profit as the most important measure of corporate success.

Yet in many ways business is still lumbering way behind the community

in the manner in which it responds. Community and its needs evolve quite quickly – yet many of the corporate social responsibility strategies of big business seem to be mired in a model that doesn't evolve or change.

While some dinosaurs still struggle with the new world order and still wonder why a corporate social responsibility strategy is needed at all, many of those just taking it up are taking up models or philosophies that are already out of date.

The argument is how can business engage with community? Maybe the argument should be turned around and said how can business exist without the community?

Business as part of the community

In many conversations about corporate social responsibility "the community" (always in inverted commas) is talked about as though it is a strange planet that is visited once or twice a year – and then only with a photographer in tow to record the occasion for the annual report.

- Companies send volunteers out to work "in the community".
- Companies make donations "to the community."
- Companies sign up to alliances with a group "in the community."



Carol Schwartz

Carol Schwartz is the Director of the Highpoint Property Group, responsible for Highpoint Shopping Centre, Australia's fourth largest regional shopping centre. Ms Schwartz, who has a background in law and business administration, is the Chair of Our Community, the Industry Superannuation Property Trust and the Melbourne International Arts Festival. She was awarded the Centenary of Federation Medal in 2003 in recognition of her outstanding service as a leading business executive and board participant.

[CSR - in perspective]

Waking with Dinosaurs on Planet Community.

[continued from
previous page]

There is often a disconnect there. The “community” action is separate from their other activities. It is not aligned with their activities. It is not consistent with their activities.

Dressing a group of workers in coloured t-shirts, plonking them on a bus and sending them off to help a charity “in the community” is not a sustainable corporate social responsibility program in the 21st century. Nor is a one-off handover of an over-sized cheque.

Companies need to realise the people who live on the planet “community”. Once you’re introduced to the inhabitants it’s easier to argue why you need to be involved and why it’s easy to commit to a “real” and innovative approach.

The planet Community is made up of:

- The people who buy their goods and services – their market
- The people who work for them
- Their shareholders
- The directors of companies
- Their families
- Their friends.

Everything the company does is possible only because there is a community that supplies them with customers, with employees and with shareholders. Without the community they can not exist.

If we were talking about building markets instead of building corporate social responsibility no-one would blink an eye at money being spent to build markets, to keep customers happy and to build an ongoing relationship between company and customer.

When being a good corporate citizen is

about looking after the customers, the employees and the people who make your business strong, it becomes a core issue not a cost centre deep in the bowels of the public affairs portfolio.

I hope we are not back here in 10 years talking about this subject. I hope in 10 years we have evolved enough that there is no debate by corporates wondering whether money spent on community could have been money better returned to shareholders as profit.

Walking the walk on CSR or ticking the box?

The only way we will succeed is if corporate social responsibility is not a section or an activity but a philosophical aim of business.

I wonder with many of the CSR schemes that promote volunteers going out and spending a day involved with an organisation that they have no real values match or sustainable involvement with. And then I wonder what would be the company’s attitude to those same people asking to leave work early or start late so they could:

- Read books at their child’s school
- Coach the local soccer team
- Do the accounts for a local health service.
- Take an afternoon off to fundraise for their local advocacy group.

They are all roles where people make a difference by volunteering and taking on leadership roles in their own local communities. They are all roles where people are committed to making more effective the groups that impact on their

[csr in action]

Company:

Green’s General Foods

Non-Profit partner:

UnitingCare

Activity:

Sponsorship of Pancake Day, UnitingCare’s only national fundraiser, which aims to help

alleviate poverty.

People cook and sell pancakes at their workplace, school or community group on

Shrove Tuesday. Green’s provided 40,000 bottles

Green’s Pancake Shake and 10,000 bottles of maple-flavoured syrup, valued at \$100,000.

The company also donated \$24,000 cash,

the proceeds of an on-pack promotion of Pancake Day on the company’s Pancake Shake product.

[CSR - in perspective]

Waking with Dinosaurs on Planet Community.

[continued from
previous page]

lives and on the lives of their families.

Is that a more valuable, more sustainable version of CSR or is that taking an hour to goof off? It is a question that is worth some contemplation.

The only way CSR can really succeed is if it becomes part of a company's DNA, an underlying principle that not just influences but dictates every aspect of business life and the way businesses go about their work.

It is a values mix. Business can try the CSR stuff but without the values attached to it, it is a fluffy photo-op or cosmetic change – not a sustainable difference.

Until corporate social responsibility moves from being a scheduled activity, an optional extra or a forced, unnatural, slightly uncomfortable activity to a natural activity that is consistent from the Board to the shopfloor we are doomed to return here in 10 years or 20 years and have the same conversation.

The one saving grace is that while many at Board and senior executive level are still to be convinced of the value of CSR, the same can't be said for their employees. The trends are quite clearly showing that many of the initiatives now being developed are not top-down but bottom-up.

Employees are not content to be individual profit centres. They want to do more. Be more. While corporate Australia gave millions to the recent Tsunami appeal, many companies were spurred into action not by execs but by their staff offering up ideas on how the business could contribute – and not just cash – but through activities that took

staff planning and involvement.

I am the Chair of Our Community, that runs the Australian Giving Centre that raised about \$3.3 million for the Tsunami appeals, and I know the staff there received an unprecedented number of calls from staff associations and committees looking at the best ways to help.

Businesses don't just need to think of what contribution they can make to the community but the contribution the community can make to their staff both in terms of health and wellbeing, and building the team as well as individual initiative.

So our challenge is not necessarily to walk the talk in corporate social responsibility but to make it so ingrained, so much a part of our individual corporate DNA, so sustainable in the future that we do it, we practise it without thinking.

Man is not an island. And community is not some distant planet that is merely a stopover for business on the way to somewhere else. ■

[they said]

“Working in partnership not only has the potential to enrich people's lives but can also deliver tangible results for all Australians. Community and business partnerships are a driver to accomplish better outcomes than any group acting alone could achieve.”

*John Howard
Prime Minister of Australia*

Is corporate volunteering falling short?

AUSTRALIAN companies are spending millions of dollars developing corporate volunteering programs for their staff. While volunteering initiatives can be good for staff morale, are they succeeding in their aims of having an impact in the community? DRANNIE DUNCAN and KATHY RICHARDSON look at some of the issues facing major companies in coming up with a scheme that does as much for the community as it does for the company.

Ever since the Body Shop began a trend of paying staff to help out at a local charity more and more companies have decided that sending volunteers into the community is a great idea.

All over Australia business staff are switching off their computers, swapping suits for brightly coloured T-shirts and boarding buses destined for the local homeless shelter, or park, or school, to dole out soup, plant trees, or take up paintbrushes.

It is an activity that is often described as a “win-win-win” – with benefits flowing to the staff involved, the business who employs them and the community group who hosts their volunteer effort.

And it is one that has been steadily growing in popularity since the 1990s.

Volunteering Australia says corporate volunteering is one of the most effective forms of Corporate Social Responsibility, involving the contribution to a community group of time, talent, energy, skills and resources.

“Prosperous companies need stable, healthy communities in which to operate. Corporations also recognise that volunteers play a key role in developing and maintaining these healthy communities,” Volunteering Australia says.

In the US – the home of corporate philanthropy – corporate volunteering has become extremely widespread, particularly among the country’s biggest companies.

While the exact number of corporate volunteering programs in the US is difficult to come by, a 2003 study found that 47 of the Fortune 50 companies mentioned on their websites, in one fashion or another, the volunteer activities of their employees.

The US Points of Light Foundation, an organisation set up to encourage more people to take part in volunteer community service, says corporate volunteering has become “central to the corporate philanthropy missions of a growing number of companies of various sizes around the world”.

Yet despite the potential that seems to be offered by such activities very little research has been conducted on the phenomenon.

As a result, the Points of Light Foundation points out, there are no basic measures of

[cover story]

Is corporate volunteering falling short?

[continued from
previous page]

success relating to corporate volunteering programs, and little ability to compare one program with another.

“Yet, despite this, employee volunteering programs are flourishing and most companies are eager to associate themselves with this sort of activity,” the foundation says.

Business leaders, who in all other aspects of their working lives demand to deal in evidence and facts, are, it would seem, going with their gut on this one; and they may not be getting it right.

The win-win-win

There is no denying that at their best, corporate volunteering programs provide manifold benefits for all concerned.

In the win-win-win equation, according to Volunteering Australia, staff members benefit from a sense of personal satisfaction and fulfillment, new learning experiences and pathways to community involvement, interaction with people from other areas within the company, and opportunities to meet new people and explore new situations and challenges.

Indeed, some studies have found that volunteering may even contribute to better health, with the “helper’s high” that results from a release of endorphins believed to give the immune system a boost, speed recovery from surgery and cut down on sleeplessness.

The outlook is similarly healthy for companies that put in place employee volunteer programs.

Like other Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, volunteer programs help companies portray a more positive corporate image, create heightened and positive recognition by customers and consumers, new business opportunities, a transformed relationship between the company and the local community, and an improved triple bottom line.

Volunteering Australia says such programs can also help to create among staff an increased pride in and loyalty to the company, better employee attendance, recruitment and retention, improved staff morale, motivation, team spirit and initiative, enhanced workplace relationships, and new skill development.

For the community, employee volunteering programs can result in transferal of skills, knowledge and technical expertise, access to teams of volunteers for major tasks and free or subsidised resources, improved understanding between the business and not-for-profit sectors, and increased public awareness of community issues.

Volunteering Australia says such programs can also help to change the business behaviours and practices that create social, economic and environmental problems and create new income streams for community programs.

[csr in action]

Company:

Collex & McDonald’s

Non-Profit partner:

Clean Up Australia

Activity:

Sponsorship of Clean Up Australia Day, held each year in March. This year’s resulted in over 670,000 volunteers removed more than 8,450 tonnes of rubbish from our beaches, parks, streets, bushland and waterways.

[cover story]

Is corporate volunteering falling short?

[continued from
previous page]

Avoiding the “Pat a poor person” approach

What is not spelled out in the various reports, websites and other promotional material that champion the benefits of corporate volunteering programs is that if they are not done properly, they can have little impact or – worse – can actually do harm to the very groups they are trying to serve.

A badly conceived, poorly run or tokenistic program can soak up an organisation’s already meagre resources, alienate the company from both its community group partner and its consumers, and leave a bitter taste in the mouths of the very staff the business may be trying to win over.

The most fundamental failure of a corporate volunteering program occurs when businesses give lots of what the groups don’t need and little of what they want.

As one school teacher commented to Business Community Intelligence, “Our school’s been painted so many times I can’t remember what colour it’s supposed to be. I’d much rather companies gave us what we need: expertise, mentoring and resources.”

Problems such as these are far from new.

Seven years ago New Zealander Darren Quirk, investigating the potential way forward for corporate volunteering in his country as part of a Winston Churchill Fellowship, said the imbalance of resources available to business and community groups could cause imbalanced partnerships.

“This can result in businesses perceiving themselves to be the saviours of ‘helpless’ community groups,” Quirk’s report said.

“This outlook, although philanthropic, is patronising. It can result in arrogance where businesses bring their understanding of what is needed, ignoring the knowledge and desires of the community.”

While a one-day painting or tree planting project might well fulfill the business’ aims of boosting morale and encouraging team building, many community groups believe that a lot more value can be derived from deeper and longer-term commitments.

“There are some companies that almost have a ‘pat a poor person’ approach to their volunteering,” said one community group leader who has experienced a number of visits from good-hearted and well-meaning corporates.

“They come out, see the need and suddenly feel this incredible sense of guilt. But their response is they want to do something immediately, often either writing a cheque or sending their staff as volunteers for a day. Once that is done the guilt is eased, problem fixed and they move on.

[csr in action]

Companies:

Ten, Shaver Shop

Non-Profit partner:

Leukaemia Foundation

Activity:

Sponsorship of the World’s Greatest Shave to Care and Cure, in which people ask their friends and family to sponsor them to shave or colour their hair.

Money raised helps the foundation care for patients and families living with leukaemia and fund research into better treatments and cures for the future.

[cover story]

Is corporate volunteering falling short?

[continued from
previous page]

“Cash or volunteering is great but ongoing involvement – a real connection – is what we really want. I would rather have one of their young lawyers express their community passion by sitting on my Board where I could have access to their knowledge and guidance on an ongoing basis.

“I can find people to paint or clean but I can’t find someone I can turn to for legal advice or to work out my books.”

Quirk points to a project involving a large company that built a hall in a depressed area as one example of a high-profile corporate activity that went very wrong.

“Without buy-in of the community and without reading their needs the facility has fallen into disuse,” he says.

Consulting the volunteers

Other serious problems can result when companies adopt a top-down or heavy-handed approach to their corporate volunteering programs.

Case Study: Australia Post

Not all good corporate volunteering programs involve paying staff to volunteer. Australia Post’s new volunteer encouragement scheme brings rewards for staff who have already built the volunteering ethos into their lives.

Australia Post has developed a new scheme to reward employees who volunteer consistently for more than a year at the charity of their choice.

The Australia Post Community Champions Awards were launched in January, with monthly winners receiving \$1000 for the charity of their choice plus a \$100 gift voucher for themselves.

The company is using the program to thank staff who have built volunteering into their busy lives, and to encourage others to do the same.

The great response to the program – more than 90 applications were received for the first selection process – has delighted organiser Janice Mascini.

The first winner, Shirley Freeman, has spent more than 30 years working in virtually every community group in her tiny Tasmanian town of Avoca. Her \$1000 reward is going to Camp Quality.

For further information contact: Janice.Mascini@auspost.com.au

[csr in action]

Companies:

Foster’s Group

Non-Profit partner:

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

Activity:

Supported the foundation’s first public appeal, which included creating a portal page on the company’s intranet with details of the charity and the three-week appeal, and conducting weekly fundraising activities.

[cover story]

Is corporate volunteering falling short?

[continued from
previous page]

As many studies – and many staff – have pointed out, it is hardly “volunteering” when employees are told what to do and when to do it.

Worse is when the business’ involvement is perceived as little more than a public relations exercise.

“Staff will not tend to choose to be part of programs that are just about making the company look good. And this disinterest can easily turn into resentment,” Quirk says.

Volunteering Australia is also keen to point out that the buy-in of staff is an often neglected but crucial aspect of corporate volunteering programs.

The organisation urges businesses thinking of establishing an employee volunteer program to put in place processes for encouraging staff to identify their own volunteering opportunities and getting team consensus on the type of volunteer work staff would like to do.

“Volunteers rarely return to volunteer work if their initial experience has not been positive,” the organisation says.

Case Study: Adidem

Not all of the causes chosen by Adidem staff for their voluntary efforts are high-profile; it’s all about getting staff involved and making a real contribution to the communities in which the companies operate.

In Australia the Adidem Group operates retail chains The Body Shop (70 stores) and Accessorize (18 stores).

The Adidem Group’s Community Projects Program requires staff, as part of their paid working hours, to participate in community volunteer work.

The objective of the program is to make an effective and real contribution to the communities in which the companies operate, as well as creating stakeholder fulfilment by empowering staff to become active citizens.

In 2004 The Adidem Group volunteered 7216 hours (159 working days / 31 working weeks).

Some community projects chosen by staff are not high-profile and need all the volunteers they can find.

One such project is the Mercy Care Women’s refuge, where Adidem staff have used their retailing experience to sort donated clothing and make up age-appropriate packs for women and children.



[csr in action]

Companies:

AGL

Non-Profit partner:

UnitingCare

Activity:

Sponsorship of Pancake Day, UnitingCare’s only national fundraiser, which aims to help alleviate poverty.

The company made a \$50,000 donation and AGL staff raised a further \$8000 holding their own Pancake Day events across Australia.

[cover story]

Is corporate volunteering falling short?

[continued from
previous page]



Volunteers also made meals, which could be frozen and reheated for women and children who arrived unannounced and hungry at the refuge.

This service reduced the costs for the refuge, and gave the women and children the opportunity to have a healthy, comforting home-cooked meal.

As one staff member who volunteered at the Mercy Women's Refuge said: "This is the best project I've ever been involved with. I completed my full number of hours and now I want to do more in my own time".

Other volunteering activities undertaken by Adidem employees include:

- Teaching English to refugee children
- Talking to teenage girls about healthy self-esteem and doing facials
- Providing administration for The Big Issue, visiting and chatting with vendors, magazine delivery and front desk support
- Pamper sessions for different women's and men's groups
- Working with the RSPCA washing and cleaning animals, and learning and teaching obedience training
- Delivering meals for Meals on Wheels programs
- Planting 10,000 native trees with Greenfleet
- Walking dogs for elderly and disabled people
- Working with the Good Start Breakfast Club in local schools setting up breakfast facilities, helping children make breakfast, encouraging children to eat a healthy breakfast
- Working in the Salvation Army Opportunity Shop, assisting with merchandising
- Clean up Business Day and Clean Up Australia Day
- Providing assistance with training, development and administration for Women's Referral Information Exchange (WIRE)
- Preparing sandwiches and soup for the homeless.

Building a solid foundation

If the concept of a staff-business partnership is fundamental to a successful employee volunteering program, so too is the notion of a partnership between the business (and its volunteers) and the community group they are hoping to help.

It is in this area particularly that so many well-meaning companies come unstuck.

[csr in action]

Companies:

Foster's Group

Non-Profit

partner: *The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne*

Activity:

Supported the hospital's Good Friday Appeal by providing beverages to the team of volunteers as they finished their day at the central collection location.

[cover story]

Is corporate volunteering falling short?

[continued from
previous page]

It is possible and even probable that a volunteering program that involves staff downing business tools for a day to plant or paint or prepare food for a soup kitchen will achieve a company's team-building objectives.

However, if a company wants to make a truly lasting connection with and contribution to their community, much more can be achieved by recognising and harnessing the often expensive skills of employees and using them to work with strapped-for-cash community groups.

goodcompany, an Australian organisation that aims to encourage volunteerism among young professionals by linking members with community groups, has recognised the valuable contribution that can be made when professional skills are put to use in a voluntary capacity.

"It is often difficult for community groups to find skilled individuals who can help in a variety of ways," the organisation says.

"The goodcompany program can help community groups save money that would otherwise have been spent on fees for services ... Skilled professional assistance allows a community group to focus on what they do best – typically, helping the community in their own unique way."

goodcompany lists on its website dozens of examples of groups that have benefited from this type of very valuable volunteering, with community groups receiving a range of accounting, finance, business, fundraising, graphic design, IT, media, PR, publishing, marketing and legal help and advice.

The new Melbourne CARES program aims to facilitate similar linkages between volunteers with business skills and community groups needing such expertise.

Getting on Board

Other organisations [including publisher of this newsletter Our Community] are urging businesses to swap or combine their more traditional employee volunteering programs with a "Business on Boards" approach – encouraging and helping staff to serve on not-for-profit governance structures.

Such service helps individuals and their employer companies to build up a meaningful, ongoing and useful relationship with community groups, many of which struggle to fill Board and Committee vacancies and to attract the business and strategic skills they need to survive in today's tough environment.

The trend for corporate volunteering programs to encourage professionals to sit on Boards has its roots in the US.

As Quirk notes, "In many US corporations service on external Boards is already a virtual requirement for executives seeking promotion to the highest levels."

[csr in action]

Companies:

Caltex

Non-Profit

partner: *Starlight Children's Foundation*

Activity:

On-pack promotion for Star Day, the foundation's major national fundraising event; \$1 from every special edition Starlight pack of Havoline Premium Motor oil purchased at participating Caltex outlets was donated to the foundation.

[cover story]

Is corporate volunteering falling short?

[continued from
previous page]

The trend may well take a stronger hold in Australia as time goes on.

Indeed, the goodcompany website already lists Board members, particularly those with law, business development, finance and marketing skills, among the top requests for assistance from community groups.

Case Study: IBM

The expensive skills of IBM staff are put to good use in the global computer company's employee volunteering program.

IBM's global program of community engagement, IBM On Demand Community, encourages and sustains volunteerism by arming employees with technology tools targeted to not-for-profit community organisations and schools.

The program includes grants, discounted IBM products, mentoring and volunteering of computer expertise.

In Australia, the principal expression of the program is through IBM MentorPlace, a program involving IBM employees volunteering their time to mentor school students, providing advice and guidance.

The "e-mentoring" program is designed to provide an opportunity for students to gain real insight into the business community and increase their confidence about future career options.

"Our research shows that as much as communities appreciate donations of money and equipment, local agencies and schools are most interested in receiving volunteers who can share their skills and intellectual capital," says IBM Vice President of Corporate Community Relations Stanley Litow.

To assist staff with their community volunteering, IBM has made available support materials including state-of-the-art online presentations, videos, reference materials and software.

Victorian and NSW IBM mentors and primary and secondary students initially meet in person at IBM locations, enabling students to experience a "real" workplace.

Students and mentors then begin communicating online through a series of projects and activities. Initially, this involves getting to know each other, moving on to topics such as leadership, careers, inventions and technology's role in society.

The program usually lasts for two terms. ▶

[csr in action]

Companies:

National Australia Bank

Non-Profit partner:

The Australian Ballet

Activity:

Lead sponsor of The Australian Ballet and, as a part of the three-year arrangement, will also be the major sponsor of the national education program to promote ballet through classes and workshops across metropolitan and regional Australia. (announced in March).

[cover story]

Is corporate volunteering falling short?

[continued from
previous page]



Computer Expertise

IBM also donates hardware and technical expertise to community organisations and schools.

Technicians work with the organisation to assess its current computer situation, plan its technology needs, upgrade software and train staff. Some organisations are also eligible for grants or discounts on computers.

Many IBM employees set up a long-term individual partnership with a school or community group, working with them to access all the available grants and types of assistance IBM can offer.

“No company can mandate volunteerism,” says IBM Chairman Sam Palmisano.

“The decision and self-sacrifice comes from within the individual. What we can do is encourage and support this distinctive aspect of our culture by providing education, technology, funding and recognition to tens of thousands of IBM colleagues who enrich their communities with their expertise and caring.”

Further information about IBM's On Demand Community and other partnership programs can be found at: <http://www.ibm.com/ibm/ibmgives/>

Making it real

Despite a growing trend, identified in a range of studies around the world, towards one-off or annual, rather than ongoing, volunteering efforts few would argue against the notion that a real commitment requires a genuine allocation of resources, particularly time.

In the end, it is about creating partnerships – between the company and its staff, and between the company, its staff and the community group it is volunteering to help.

And a true partnership, Quirk says, involves working “with” rather than “on” the community.

“Companies with good community involvement practice respect the autonomy, knowledge and expertise of their community partner,” he says.

“These businesses make a sincere attempt to understand the issues of the group and work alongside them. They agree on the objectives, priorities, and methods to implement them. They consider themselves as equal partners.”

Only by pursuing such a partnership can a corporate volunteering program truly become a “win-win-win”. ■

[csr in action]

Companies:

St George Bank

Non-Profit partner:

The Children's Hospital at Westmead

Activity:

Sponsorship of a book: "The Complete Parenting Guide – Caring for your child from toddler to teenager."

Commonwealth Corporate Responsibility Inquiry

ACCC chairman Graeme Samuel's warning about companies needing to show compassion or have it legislated is prescient as Parliament announces a new inquiry into CSR.

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services has announced that it will conduct an inquiry into corporate social responsibility and triple-bottom-line reporting.

The terms of reference (24 June 2005) (http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/corporations_ctte/corporate_responsibility/tor.htm) for the inquiry indicate that the inquiry is predominantly focussed on the issue of the extent to which corporate decision-makers should consider the interests of stakeholders other than shareholders in corporate decision-making.

The Committee will inquire into Corporate Responsibility and Triple-Bottom-Line reporting, for incorporated entities in Australia, with particular reference to:

- a. The extent to which organisational decision-makers have an existing regard for the interests of stakeholders other than shareholders, and the broader community.
- b. The extent to which organisational decision-makers should have regard for the interests of stakeholders other than shareholders, and the broader community.
- c. The extent to which the current legal framework governing directors' duties encourages or discourages them from having regard for the interests stakeholders other than

shareholders, and the broader community.

- d. Whether revisions to the legal framework, particularly to the Corporations Act, are required to enable or encourage incorporated entities or directors to have regard for the interests of stakeholders other than shareholders, and the broader community. In considering this matter, the Committee will also have regard to obligations that exist in laws other than the Corporations Act.
- e. Any alternative mechanisms, including voluntary measures that may enhance consideration of stakeholder interests by incorporated entities and/or their directors.
- f. The appropriateness of reporting requirements associated with these issues.
- g. Whether regulatory, legislative or other policy approaches in other countries could be adopted or adapted for Australia.

In inquiring into these matters, the Committee will consider both for profit and not-for-profit incorporated entities under the Corporations Act.

Submissions should be sent to the Committee Secretary at corporations. joint@aph.gov.au or (02) 6277 3171 before 15 September 2005. The committee is due to report by November 29, 2005.

Corporate armies go into battle for the environment

In recent years, many Australian companies have been encouraging and supporting their employees to volunteer their time to help their local environment. But how do you make sure that the program you devise is meaningful and long-lasting when you only have a few hours to offer? Conservation Volunteers Australia believes it has the answer.

Volunteering opportunities that provide both an enjoyable experience and an opportunity to make a real, lasting impact on the environment can be hard to come by, particularly for companies that have a huge army of volunteers but limited time to offer.

Enter Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA), a national not-for-profit organisation that works to involve volunteers in the protection and rehabilitation of Australia's environment.

The organisation works with government and community groups to identify priority projects requiring assistance and then recruits and manages teams of volunteers to complete labour-intensive tasks such as tree planting, bush regeneration, seed collection or wildlife surveys.

Each year CVA involves thousands of volunteers from across Australia and the world, many of whom participate in projects over several months in the most remote areas of Australia.

CVA also has projects suitable for volunteers who can only give relatively short amounts of time much closer to home.

All CVA projects are carried out as part of long-term, considered environment management plans and in conjunction with local project partners (such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service), who ensure ongoing maintenance. It en-

sure the efforts of volunteers are part of a strategic approach.

The benefit for corporates in partnering with CVA is that they avoid the situation where Human Resources staff run around trying to find a suitable project for their volunteers to take part in or – even worse – where community groups come up with a meaningless or unnecessary task just to accommodate the volunteers.

CVA has also partnered Toyota in Australia to develop Certificate I in Active Volunteering, allowing project participants to take home both the satisfaction of having helped to save the planet, as well as a qualification.

CVA has project sites all over the country that are suitable for corporate volunteering programs.

For more information contact:
Anna Grounds, Partnership Manager,
Conservation Volunteers Australia.
Phone 03 5330 2600 or email
agrounds@conservationvolunteers.com.au ■

Volunteers come out of their Shell



Jenny Odgers is Social Investment Manager with Shell in Australia. She talks to Business Community Intelligence about the multinational company's Australian Workplace Volunteering Program 1+1=3. The unusual program name comes from the idea of Shell giving a day, the employee providing a day in their own time which is then also matched by Shell.

BCI: This is a new initiative from Shell, what made you adopt the program?

Jenny Odgers: Shell has had longer-term volunteering on company time offered for some time. This includes our five-day fellowships with Shell Coastal Volunteers and our three-week opportunity to join the Shell Questacon Science Circus for its remote communities' tour.

However, we recognised that being away from home for that amount of time does not suit everyone. We want to also support shorter – but no less valuable – volunteering efforts.

Taking a step further back, via feedback from employees, we know that employees not only want to work for a company that contributes to the community, but they want the company to support their own volunteering efforts. Shell took notice of this feedback.

BCI: When Shell staff volunteer with community partners do they also provide their unique skills – eg planners help with planning, accountants assisting with budget planning or modelling etc. What are some of the skills they have contributed so far?

Jenny Odgers: We do undertake volunteering where more than labour skills are required. For example we have offered opportunities for Internet design, & reviewing a marketing plan. We have

asked our community partners to think about ways we can help in particular areas such as reviewing strategic plans, HR skills etc. This is a developing area but we are very keen to go beyond providing labour, to providing skills. However, often people do just want that experience of providing labour.

BCI: How is the program working so far?

Jenny Odgers: It's early days. The new program was launched in late 2004. It has certainly been well-received by employees. I know, for example, that more than 40 employees in Melbourne participated in volunteering efforts before the end of the year.

I would hope by the end of this year that at least 10 per cent of our workforce would have used either one or, better still, two of their available volunteering days.

BCI: How are you going to evaluate the success of the program - The number of hours? Response from the community groups? Or staff surveys?

Jenny Odgers: Really all of the above. Take up is important from a quantitative viewpoint. But the calibre of the individual or team experience is really important too and people who participated are asked to provide feedback to us. Certainly how it is benefiting the community partner is a key area for evaluation - have the volunteers been

[case in point]

Volunteers come out of their shell

[continued from
previous page]

helpful/was it a worthwhile experience for the community partner? We intend to sit down with all of our community partners on a formal basis at least once a year and obviously dialogue will continue throughout the year.

BCI: Staff can choose to volunteer time with any of six community partners. What happens if anyone prefers to volunteer with another organisation?

Jenny Odgers: If employees want to participate in the Shell program, then they need to volunteer with one or more of the nominated organisations. We want to establish long-term relationships with the selected organisations rather than ad-hoc with a number of different organisations – and we would like those organisations to provide opportunities for volunteering over a long time frame (several years). A fit in terms of values is important - in particular around health & safety. All community groups underwent a health & safety audit, before we proceeded to formal agreements as volunteering partners. In addition, the community partners must:

- Work in Shell's social investment areas of focus (education, with a focus on disadvantaged groups, care for the environment, and health, with a focus on disadvantaged groups)
- Be not-for-profit and hold Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status
- Have a volunteer manager/coordinator
- Have appropriate Health Safety and Environment standards, insurance cover and be prepared to sign a Volunteering Agreement with Shell

There is the capacity for employees to seek support for another organisation and nominate it to be added to the program. However, they will need to meet the criteria mentioned above.

BCI: Companies thinking about corporate volunteering all ask the same question – “If people want to volunteer locally by hearing reading at the primary school or by umpiring at the T-ball, how can we differentiate between their role as parents and their role as company volunteers?”

Jenny Odgers: My view is that you don't necessarily want to differentiate – they are one in the same person after all! However, the way we have structured the program with our selected community partners offers the opportunity to employees for a different volunteering experience to the type of volunteering you mention.

BCI: Do you think these types of initiatives make your staff and recruits view you more positively as an employer? How do you know?

Jenny Odgers: When Shell recruits on campus, along with information about our various business we do supply information about the principles and values of the company, including its CSR program. Internally, we run communication programs on this topic, as well as getting the message out about our social investment program. This includes specific sessions for recent recruits.

There are a lot of things that go into the mix to come up with 'a positive view of the company'. The importance attached to CSR activities depends in part on the values of the individual.

[csr in action]

Companies:

Community Alliance, CU2 Sunglasses, Essilor - Nikon, Focus Dailies, Nine Network, Southern Cross Talk Radio Network.

Non-Profit partner:
International Centre for Eyecare Education

Activity:

Sponsorship of National Sunnies for Sight Day, which aims to encourage Australians, young and old, to have their eyes checked regularly and to raise funds for communities which have little access to the right eye-health services. People wear sunglasses on the day and make a donation.

[case in point]

Volunteers come out of their shell

[continued from
previous page]

My view is that activities such as the Workplace Giving program make a contribution to an employee holding an overall positive view. I receive feedback that indicates that. It's not the only thing, but it helps to know that your employer cares about the community it operates in and is prepared to support it, and you.

BCI: Shell is a large international organisation with thousands of staff in Australia. How can individual staff members influence Shell's corporate social responsibility agenda?

Jenny Odgers: I will give you two examples of ways that employees can have some influence in this area.

The first is via membership of the Social Investment Network. This is a group of 12 to 15 employees, from all around Australia, who represent different business areas in the social investment space. It consists of employees who formally have social investment as part of their role (eg Geelong) as well as employees who 'just' have a passionate interest in this area.

The Network's role is, among other things, to look at formal proposals to decide whether or not they should be sent to the higher-level Social Investment Steering Group for decision and to review our social investment areas of focus. You can see that this is a very influential group that was heavily involved in the formulation of the program and which really helps set the social investment agenda.

Employees can also become members of the employee group Project Better World. This international initiative is designed for employees who want

to help embed and make tangible Shell's commitment to sustainable development for staff around the world.

BCI: What are you most proud of in this area?

Jenny Odgers: The longevity of the commitment and the fact that I don't have to convince the leaders of the company of the worth of this work!

Whilst we have changed some program activity and areas of focus over the years I have worked in this area, the commitment has never wavered and I have never heard a discussion about 'scaling back' the social investment budget. I am proud to work for a company who has this attitude!

BCI: What are some of the other challenges?

Jenny Odgers: Communication is vital – you need to get the message out effectively to employees about the opportunities that are available. Communication will play a huge role in increasing the numbers participating.

However, we need to keep in mind always that employees are busy people and may simply not have the time to spend, rather than be unwilling. It is important that Shell does not assume that all employees want to engage in volunteering.

For further information:

Contact Jenny Odgers

Tel: (03) 8823 4146

Internet:

www.shell.com.au/socialinvestment ■

[csr in action]

Companies:

Sea World

Non-Profit partner:

Marine Education Society of Australasia

Activity:

Sponsorship of Sea Week 2005 – Save Our Sharks

Best Practice in Corporate Volunteering at a Glance

This table summarises the different approaches Australian companies have adopted to try and improve their corporate volunteering.

The ideas with one star are better than no volunteering at all but don't lead to long term community change or to significant staff satisfaction with the company's commitment.

Two stars shows that the company uses its unique expertise to help community groups in a sustainable way but staff do not develop long term relationships with the NFPs.

Three star initiatives lead to long term partnerships, societal change and a workforce with on-going commitment to the NFP.

Type of Volunteering	Cost to Company	Staff Benefit	Community benefit	Best Practice in Australia
All staff tree planting days, painting playgrounds, soup kitchens *	\$ (wages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonding with colleagues No deep affiliation with NFP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intense work done over short period-hard to organise No ongoing commitment to outcomes of NFP 	Enrol with <i>Conservation Volunteers Australia</i> for a well-managed environmental project with real impact
Adopt an environmental area and volunteer annually ***	\$\$ (wages plus sponsorship of particular piece of land)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonding with colleagues Ongoing staff affiliation with environment Feed back on progress, results oriented approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term sustainable environmental change Can use company's donation to pay for additional volunteers 	<i>Rio Tinto, BHP</i> have adopted at-risk areas and work with CVA so any volunteers can participate and make a real impact
One paid day working with a charity chosen by company **	\$ (wages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonding with colleagues No deep personal affiliation with charity chosen by company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No long term affiliation and potential for greater partnership Usually manual labour - not using unique and expensive skills 	<i>IBM</i> staff work with NFPs including schools to sort out computer problems and even donate computers

[at a glance]

Best Practice in Corporate Volunteering at a Glance

[continued from
previous page]

Type of Volunteering	Cost to Company	Staff Benefit	Community benefit	Best Practice in Australia
Own time, own charity *	Negligible \$ (ceremony, contributions to winner's charity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No bonding with colleagues Staff feel their choice of charity appreciated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers are committed already to this charity on a long term basis Not all working on same day so NFP can manage volunteer time 	<i>Australia Post</i> Community Champions Award recognises long term commitment by staff in their own time
One or more paid days to work with your own charity ***	\$ (wages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff feel their choice appreciated Variety of tasks- can serve on a community Board, donate unique skills, learn new skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term commitment to NFP Not all working on same day Potential long term affiliation with company –volunteering, sponsorship, 	Shell 1+1=3 ie Shell pays for 2 days if staff member volunteers one day in own time with community partner Body Shop staff receive 2 days paid volunteer time with their choice of charity

Key: * better than no volunteering

** good for the staff but only short-term benefit to the community

*** great for staff, company reputation and of significant and on-going benefit to community organisations

Volunteering for change. Getting values (not just value) into the equation.

Deloitte.

Establishing a corporate social responsibility program, is one thing but living and breathing it is another. Here TONI HAMILTON, Director of Special Projects for Deloitte Australia explains how CSR works best when it is an extension of the company's own values which defines the way it goes about its business.

Think back 30 years to when a firm like Deloitte was a bunch of accountants – bean counters who pushed pens and paper, and completed forms. Fast-forward to 2005 when these people are professional services consultants who help business and government in key areas such as compliance, transactions, governance, risk, performance and even triple bottom line reporting.

Moreover, these days we need to nurture consultants with specialist industry skills. We have experts in wine, mining, financial services, manufacturing, retail, the public sector and corporate social responsibility. Good heavens, doesn't anyone just fill in forms anymore?

Oh yes – and we work globally. Simply understanding the culture of the country in which we live and work isn't enough; we carry out cross-border transactions and need to understand not just the laws and regulations of other countries, but the people and their customs too.

So what does this all mean? It means that inside Deloitte, as in many firms, professionals need to be more than just technical experts. They need to be people who can think outside the square, who have a broad vision and an understanding of a diverse range of people, businesses and cultures.

One way to help people grow as diverse human beings and to expose themselves to a range of diverse experiences is

to allow them to carry out corporate volunteerism in the not-for-profit sector. This has been around for years in the form of pro bono work and today firms are looking at the number of hours they spend in pro bono work and deciding whether to channel some of those hours to a different kind of volunteerism – working on the spot for not-for-profits (NFPs) whether as mentors, advisers, consultants, cooks, carers or gardeners – whatever is needed at the time.

It is not surprising, therefore, that volunteerism is on the increase. In England and Wales, according to the British government's 2003 Citizenship Survey, 26 million people engaged in some kind of informal volunteering. This represents a growth of 1.5 million since 2001. Last year 67 percent of young people were involved in informal volunteering and 41 per cent in formal volunteering in the UK.

This growth trend continues in Australia. In 1997 Australian volunteers donated 510 million hours to community organisations. By 2000 this had risen to 704 million hours per year. More and more businesses are investing in organised volunteering programs in the workplace, some promoted by management but many where employees are pushing for the company to take on a greater community involvement

The downside of this increased trend towards volunteering in the corpo-

[deloitte thought leadership]

Volunteering for change. Getting values (not just value) into the equation.

[continued from previous page]

rate world is that some non-profit groups are finding it time-consuming to administer the volunteers that are being offered to them. It's a very difficult position for the non-profits. They don't wish to say "no" to a well meaning corporation keen to thrust people their way – but in many instances they need volunteers trained to be counsellors or advisors and committed to providing a certain number of hours a week. Or to be on call when their advice or expertise is needed. Despite the best intentions of business, not always do the needs of the company and the community group mesh seamlessly.

So should companies simply shrug their shoulders and give up? The answer is a deafening "no". Everyone acknowledges the best form of corporate sponsorship – whether by cash or volunteerism – is a true partnership, and like all partnerships the parties involved need to sit down and strategically work out a plan that will best suit everyone and determine the areas where they can work cooperatively to achieve a common aim. In any volunteering effort the non-profit group has to provide resources to "accept the gift" of volunteering and it is important that companies acknowledge this and offer their administrative and organisational skills to assist their partner in reaching a solution that is acceptable to all.

Some businesses rush into volunteering initiatives and many other CSR strategies with a short-term aim rather than a long-term vision. More importantly they can rush down a CSR path without establishing whether their activities are consistent with the company's own values and mission.

It's one thing to take part in a community partnership but that activity – and the beneficial impact it can have on employees and the company's reputation – can be seriously undermined if the company doesn't endeavour to "live its values" and show its staff that the public principles it supports are also the principles that underpin how the organisation goes about its daily business.

Deloitte has given this issue a great deal of thought, both in Australia and in its 140 member firms around the globe. In a speech to the United Nations' International Centre for Corporate Accountability forum last year, William G Parrett, CEO of the organisation of Deloitte member firms, summed it up by saying:

"It is no longer sufficient for multinational corporations to do merely what is legal. In every instance, multinational corporations must do what is right – through their conduct, not just their words."

CEO Australia Giam Swiegers agrees: "Ethical conduct is part of the framework that supports our values and underpins our day to day behaviour. Each of us plays an important role through our conduct."

It is a commitment that goes beyond simply undertaking a series of external CSR activities. Rather it is a philosophy that guides Deloitte in all its operations. Each of the member firms across the globe has contributed to the shared values and the ethical principles that steer the company.

[csr in action]

Companies:

Australia Post

Partner:

Our Community

Activity:

Developing the Marketing, Media & Post Centre (www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmedia/postcentre) to make available free marketing and media advice, tools and resources to all 700,000 community groups.

[deloitte thought leadership]

Volunteering for change. Getting values (not just value) into the equation.

[continued from previous page]

Why is this important?

As Parrett points out “principles are important because rules cannot cover all situations. But principles can be encouraged and demanding responsible action.”

It is the belief that in every instance, we must do what is right—through our conduct, not just our words. CSR is not a luxury or a choice; it is necessary for our growth as a business and for ensuring a robust and sustainable future. But for it to be real and it to be sustainable it has to fit in and be driven by our global shared values which are:

- **Integrity** is the cornerstone of accurate financial reporting, strong capital markets, and sound corporate governance.
- **Outstanding value to markets and clients** stems from the effectiveness of our services and helps us protect the public interest and maintain investor confidence.
- **Our commitment to each other** is demonstrated through our active community involvement aimed at building resources and capacity, economic development and education; as an Employer of Choice, we employ outstanding professionals and equip them with the training, experience, and tools to serve our clients with excellence.
- **Our strength from cultural diversity** emerges from our multiculturalism, principles of inclusion and the ability to operate globally, and is enhanced by our commitment to work together by understanding and respecting differences.

The nine ethical principles that underpin those values deal with honesty and integrity, professional behaviour, competence, objectivity, confidentiality, fair business practices, responsibility for society (recognising and respecting the impact we have on the world around us), respect and fair treatment and accountability and decision-making (we lead by example, using our Shared Values as our foundation).

Bringing our Global Shared Values and Ethical Principles into the full scope of CSR issues

In our view Corporate Social Responsibility describes how a company manages its business processes to generate stakeholder value, while having a positive impact on the community and minimising any adverse impact on the environment.

But any public or community activities undertaken by the company must have as their bedrock the values and principles that guide the company and the people who make up the company – the Board, the directors and all employees. It is only when there is consistency in what we do – both internally and externally – that a partnership between the company and the community can reach its maximum effectiveness.

Deloitte has developed a graphic illustration of how we see the issues of CSR: (please see this on the next page)

[csr in action]

Companies:

Foster's Group

Non-Profit partner:

Athletes as Role Models Tour to Northern Territory

Activity:

Sponsorship of the ARM Tour is a collective of a high profile athletes, educators and community leaders who travel to outback communities taking part in organised programmes that reinforce positive healthy lifestyles, while acknowledging the value and richness of indigenous culture.

[deloitte thought leadership]

Volunteering for change. Getting values (not just value) into the equation.

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Companies determine expectations for behaviour and outline these in statements such as mission, vision, shared values, and ethical principles – as shown in the centre of the wheel.

Companies can have an incredible impact within areas described in the middle section of the wheel:

- governance, accountability, transparency
- environment
- marketplace
- economic development
- community involvement
- human rights
- workplace.

These areas could look different depending upon who you ask. There are many varieties of illustrations to describe this. Our member firm in the

UK, for example, does not put “human rights” in its own section, but rather considers it part of workplace/people issues. Our global firm made it a section to point out to those not familiar with the scope of issues, that human rights is an issue for business.

The ‘wheel’ is to be used to illustrate a thought process more than to be all inclusive.

The outer circle represents the path to financial success in today’s business environment. Stakeholders such as clients, investors, shareholders, the public, not-for-profits and employees expect businesses to hold themselves accountable for their conduct in the areas described in the middle section of the wheel.

It’s up to business to keep the wheel turning and to ensure that corporations not only show leadership through their community activities but through ensuring that every decision taken is underpinned by a values-based principle that has community as well as the business at heart.

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[csr in action]

“Community Responsibility is not just something to do just because the regulators expect it.”

*Leon Davis
Chair, Westpac Banking Corporation & Deputy Chair, Rio Tinto (AFR Boss)*

Weighing up the cost of a good reputation

You only have to look at the annual report of a top 200 company to know that everyone wants to be a good company these days but how can they ensure they make the cut? And how do they compare to other companies? DRANNIE DUNCAN and CHRIS WAINWRIGHT look at the main indices that are weighing in to look past the corporate glitz and measure the corporate good.

IT SEEMS that following every new business initiative or trend is a formula or method to measure if it works or not. While Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has burst out of the shadows and onto the corporate stage in recent years, so too have a series of rating services to measure the way that business goes about the business of being good citizens.

The development of those measures, published by Reputex, the St. James Ethics Centre and Sustainable Asset Management (SAM), is assisting boards, investors and companies to evaluate and understand the impact and effectiveness of their company's corporate social responsibility initiatives.

It appears that across the board with the rise in ethical investing and companies realising that consumers and shareholders expect meaningful engagement with the community, that CSR and its evaluation is an important part of their core business practices.

The differences in methodology also lead to inevitable grumbles every time one of the indexes reports, with some companies questioning validity and theories of certain methods, such as the compulsory assessment models used by Reputex and SAM.

While the debate ebbs and flows over the different models, the fact that there is a debate at all is held up as one of

the benefits of attempting to find the most successful formula to measure a company's CSR.

Laurel Grossman, the Chief Executive Officer of Reputex, said the index had helped raise the issue of corporate social responsibility, leading to a greater take-up among companies of their evaluation method.

Reputex Social Responsibility Ratings (www.reputex.com.au) has been in existence for five years and annually evaluates Australasia's top 120 companies based on market capitalisation, rating them on their environmental impact, social impact, corporate governance and workplace practices. The organisation attempts to work with companies but where there is no cooperation they rely on publicly available documents such as annual reports.

The most recent announcement of their Reputation Ratings showed that companies on the whole were doing well in corporate governance and social impact, but were not recording the same level of performance in the areas of environment and workplace practices. Grossman said she looked forward to seeing the bottom 20 companies improving their position to an adequate rating over the next five years.

For the second year in a row, Westpac Banking Corporation received the highest rating (AAA) for its consist-

[for good measure]

Weighing up the cost of a good reputation

[continued from
previous page]

ent high standards across the four areas. Other companies in the top ten (AA) were Australia Post, BHP Billiton, Energex, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, IAG, NAB, Queensland Rail and Visy Industries. While four other companies - BP Australia Ltd, Nestle Australia Ltd, The Warehouse Group, Toyota Motor Corp Australia Ltd – received the next level of rating (AA-)

Westpac was also the only company to top the ratings in two areas – corporate governance and social impact.

Grossman said that Reputex does not consult to the top 120 companies but they do sell rating reports and provide a company a rating of its corporate responsibility for a fee to companies not being evaluated. From there the company can analyse the report or employ a consultant from another company to assist them in improving their corporate responsibility performance.

The ratings help companies and individuals to see through the financial results and the superficial glitz of activities such as high-profile sponsorships to analyse whether the company is fundamentally “good”. Grossman says the ratings help to determine if the company is committed to backing up its record as a good corporate citizen by performing well across the four areas of environment, governance, social impact and work practices.

Originally Reputex relied on not-for-profit organisations, unions and others to rate companies but after complaints of possible self-interest and bias, moved to an independent model where in-house experts perform the assessments. Grossman is confident this method ensures the ratings reflect the corporate

reality rather than the corporate spin.

In the past the ratings were released annually, however in future their results will be issued as they occur through their real time “Ratings Watch” which can be found at:

<http://www.reputex.com.au>.

Providing a “good” lesson

The other Australian entity measuring corporate social responsibility is the Corporate Responsibility Index, developed by Britain’s Business in the Community. It is an initiative of St James Ethics Centre, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, and is supported by Ernst & Young.

Corporate Responsibility Index (CRI) uses a voluntary, self-assessment process which Australian businesses can voluntarily participate in at no cost. Once the data has been entered via a secure website, Ernst and Young’s Environment and Sustainability team assesses the data and then prepares a report for each of the businesses, a general report purchasable from CRI, as well as the data which CRI’s media-partners, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* publishes in a special lift-out report.

Unlike other corporate responsibility indexes around the globe, CRI which takes its basic architecture from the Global Reporting Initiatives, aims to be a tool for use by business rather than as an economics tool guiding investment. In their research, the four key business impact areas of CSR: community, workplace, marketplace and environment are considered.

Dr Simon Longstaff, Executive Director of the St James Ethics Centre which

[csr in action]

Company:

Queensland Rail

Non-Profit partner:

Community

Activity:

Provided free train travel on Citytrain for active and returned service personnel attending the Dawn Service and ANZAC Day parade in Brisbane. Uniformed school students attending the Schools Service on April 21 also travelled for free on Citytrain.

[for good measure]

Weighing up the cost of a good reputation

[continued from
previous page]

runs the CRI, said the value of the Corporate Responsibility Index was in how it can assist companies to improve their internal processes and business, so that they can become more sustainable and successful.

The CRI comes with guidance notes which Dr Longstaff said was a virtual how-to manual of best practice CSR, as well as a 100-question self-assessment tool which requires businesses to provide evidence to back up their answers which can be validated.

"It's not just a check-the-box thing so to do it, a couple of things have to happen. You have to talk to other people in the business because no sole person has all the information, you have to have Board or CEO sign-off so you have to be pretty sure that the evidence you provide can be supported and then it is subject to validation which includes site visits," Dr Longstaff said.

"At the end of the process even if the company has not performed well against other index participants, the evidence is that they learnt a tremendous amount about what they are doing and have a basis for improvement."

He cited Fosters as an example of a company that was surprised that it had not performed as well as expected in the first Index but then worked with the knowledge it gathered and the guidance notes to become the most significant improver in the second index.

Both the practice of CSR and a system of evaluating the company's "integrated" activities across the whole company was being pushed by a variety of reasons including the "enlightened self-interest", Dr Longstaff said.

"Companies seeking to recruit and retain staff increasingly want the ability to tell a broad and comprehensive and convincing story about their engagement in the community. People will naturally assess opportunities in terms of wages and conditions but increasingly they are seeking references from companies to show why they are a company they can work for and be proud of working for," Dr Longstaff said.

The second reason, according to Dr Longstaff, is that increasingly there is compelling Australian evidence, including the study published by AMP GLOBAL investors, showing a direct correlation between companies that really care about corporate responsibility and improved performance on the share market.

While differences exist in approach, methodology and number of companies audited between Reputex and Corporate Responsibility Index, the results the companies were awarded match closely between the organisations' reports.

Companies which scored highly in the first Corporate Responsibility Index were: Westpac (100%), BP (97.98%), Rio Tinto (93.31%), BHP Billiton (92.77%), Toyota (88.06%), Cadbury Schweppes (86.92%), Holden (86.33%), Ford (85.79%) and Telstra (84.91).

In the first Corporate Responsibility Index, only 26 organisations participated in the study with an average score of 77%, which may suggest that corporate social responsibility is considered as an important issue to the top end of Australia's business sector.

The 2004 CRI results match closely with their first index with the top

[csr in action]

Companies:

Holden

Non-Profit partner:

Leukaemia Foundation

Activity:

Holden retirees signed up as volunteer drivers for the Leukaemia Foundation's patient transport program. Holden provides eleven vehicles to the Foundation which are used around Australia to transport patients to and from treatment. The volunteer driver team perform an invaluable service in assisting patients who have low immune systems and cannot take public transport. Also, for the Foundation's Worlds Greatest Shave, Holden employees across Australia shaved, coloured and waxed, including Holden Managing Director Denny Mooney.

[for good measure]

Weighing up the cost of a good reputation

[continued from
previous page]

five company's scores being: Westpac (99.53%), BP (93.21%), BHP Billiton (92.71%), Rio Tinto (92.04%) and Toyota (91.54%).

Why companies act in a corporately responsible fashion is an interesting question. Westpac CEO David Morgan told an interviewer it was "simply about doing the right thing. It's about making sure we carry out our business in an ethical and trustworthy manner. It means looking beyond the short term and beyond a single-minded focus on short-term profit maximisation."

In Australia there is one other known measure of corporate social responsibility which is the Zurich-based Sustainable Asset Management's in their Australian Sustainability Leaders Fund.

SAM is far more focussed in terms of encouraging sustainable investment through the stock exchange and provides limited detail about how and why companies are included in their leaders' lists.

As well as producing their Australian product, SAM has an international sustainable leaders fund which matches the Dow Jones Sustainability Index.

Companies are assessed using an online questionnaire which the largest 2,000 Australian publicly listed companies are invited to participate in. Non-participants are assessed using publicly available information.

Some of the companies listed in SAM's Australian Sustainability Leaders Fund include: Adelaide Bank Ltd, Ansell, BHP Billiton, Caltex Australia, Envestra, Hills Industries, James Hardie Industries, Macquarie Bank, National Australia Bank,

Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd., Santos and Westpac.

In certain respects, it is a puzzling list, particularly the inclusion of James Hardie Industries which has come under sustained public pressure in recent years over the provision of compensation for sufferers of asbestos-related illnesses.

The one certainty is that the debate over the leading businesses for CSR and the methods used to evaluate them will continue to bubble away. Hopefully so too will the efforts of those companies at the lower end of the scale to inch their way up. ■

Sites:

www.corporate-responsibility.com.au

www.reputex.com.au

www.bitc.org.uk

www.sam-group.com/html/australia/screening.cfm

[they said]

"It is a massive boost for employees to know a company is not just a money-making machine."

*Richard Branson
Founding Chairman
Virgin*

Westpac counts the benefits of CSR



For the last two years, Westpac has scored AAA ratings in RepuTex's Social Responsibility Ratings and has also been awarded top place in Australia's 2004 Corporate Responsibility Index. DRANNIE DUNCAN talked with Westpac's departing Head of Sustainability, Geraldine Skinner about the bank's attitude to CSR.

BCI: What did Westpac do to succeed in topping the CSR indices over the past 2 years?

Geraldine Skinner: Westpac has been committed to CSR over a long period and has gathered together all the appropriate policies into a Social Charter which we report on annually. We manage our internal processes, set objectives and measure our performance – just like all of our business areas. We have great people committed to CSR and we publicly report our successes and failures.

BCI: What is the greatest improvement that you've recently seen in the company's social performance?

Geraldine Skinner: Personally I have been delighted with the changes that have occurred throughout Westpac. For example, our Property Manager has taken the initiative and ploughed his area's savings into purchasing more green power. The statements for customers and shareholders can be sent out online which helps the environment and saves us money which can go to community organisations.

We are all extremely pleased by the very positive results our work with Indigenous communities in Cape York received in an independent evaluation. In addition, our employees who have been seconded there in month-long stints have come back changed people.

BCI: Who is most responsible for outstanding CSR in Westpac?

Geraldine Skinner: We have a CEO and Chair who are passionate CSR advocates. This enables change to happen more easily. Westpac's Social Responsibility Committee is also a key driver. We have all stakeholder communications (which includes CSR) grouped under one general manager who has a total commitment to social justice. This makes it much faster and simpler. In short, there are a variety of people and mechanisms which contribute. It is not just due to one or two individuals.

BCI: After rating so highly, where on earth can you improve?

Geraldine Skinner: I wish we could relax and say we had done it – but it is a journey and we always can improve. The RepuTex AAA rating is satisfying and a bit scary, because we know that we can do better. This year we are working with our suppliers and also examining our products to see how we can extend and improve them.

BCI: What advice do you have for those who didn't rate well this year?

Geraldine Skinner: Persist! When we first participated in the Good Reputation Index we came 35th! With hard work the next year we came second. Each year as a company collects and makes public all its information, it should achieve a better rating. By col-

[banking on success]

Westpac counts the benefits of CSR

[continued from
previous page]

lecting and assessing the information, it becomes even easier to see what change is needed.

BCI: What is the value of being part of a CSR index?

Geraldine Skinner: We believe that our recognised success in CSR makes us an employer of choice. We notice that our graduate recruits mention this as a reason for choosing Westpac.

The highly scientific “taxi driver test” shows that working for Westpac doesn’t attract negative comments. Our staff perspective survey shows an upward trend in employee commitment – a sure sign that people are proud of our CSR.

BCI: Does Westpac include their customers in their CSR activities?

Geraldine Skinner: Yes and no! Our staff don’t plant trees or paint pre-schools alongside our customers. However we hope to use the time customers spend at the bank to capture their attention and interest in our community partnerships.

We have community stands and a video loop highlighting some of our CSR activities in our banks. We also put partners’ inserts into our credit card and shareholder statements. However, we’ve never measured the impact of these initiatives.

BCI: What are the BIG issues facing the community that business can be involved in?

Geraldine Skinner: I feel that there are three crucial issues. Firstly, as a baby boomer I see the ageing of the population as something that the corporate sector can help address. Westpac already has a commitment to employ increased numbers of older workers and provide a shorter working week as people want to wind back but not retire totally.

We have a responsibility to provide good financial planning for older people in our community.

Secondly, the great societal divides can be lessened through business working in the community. The divide between the haves and the have-nots is still far too great.

Westpac’s employees are involved through Matching Gifts. Staff last year donated nearly \$800,000 to their chosen charities which Westpac matched. The Community Volunteering Days assist community groups and help our staff to understand some areas of disadvantage.

The third issue is climate change. We are decreasing our own use of resources and investigating green products. ■

Building the case for corporate volunteering

Mention corporate volunteering and everyone says that it is good for staff morale and good for the company. But is there evidence to support the assertion? CHRIS WAINWRIGHT looks at some of the overseas experience.

It's taken as a given whether you are talking about corporate volunteering in Atlanta or Adelaide, San Francisco or Sydney, Brisbane or Bristol. Everyone says it's a win-win-win situation – good for the company, good for the employees and good for the community.

While human resources managers say that more and more potential employees are seeking evidence that the company is leaving a footprint in the community, the research in Australia has been slower in coming.

In the United States, one of the few in-depth longitudinal research studies about corporate volunteerism was undertaken between September 2000 and February 2001 by the strategic corporate citizenship consultants, LBG Associates.

Based in New York and Washington DC, USA, LBG Associates works with leading companies in the US including Mercedes Benz, Ernst and Young, Shell and Time Warner on developing strategies to become responsible corporate citizens.

LBG Associates undertook the study of 65 US companies with a combined workforce of 4.3 million employees and an annual income of \$135 billion to identify and find solutions to many of the problems affecting US corporate volunteering programs, such as poor participation rates, mounting resistance to the strategies by lower and mid-level management.

Firstly they found a mutually agreed definition of corporate volunteerism which was: "Those community service initiatives which are planned, organised and executed by employees and endorsed by management, which generate specific benefits for the corporation, as well as the community."

The study found that 68% of all companies maintain formal corporate volunteer programs with 47% of companies using a mix of company-directed or employee directed volunteer programs with just 15 per cent having employee-driven programs. It also found that companies spent on average \$US4.90 per the total number of employees in their workforce regardless as to the actual number of employees who volunteer.

Other findings of the study found:

- 87% of companies house their volunteer programs in a corporate department.
- 13% of companies house their volunteer programs in their foundations.
- At a minimum, companies maintain 1 full-time professional staff person at the corporate-level to help coordinate volunteer activities.
- Only 48% of companies track employee participation in company-sponsored volunteer events and activities.
- 92 per cent recognised employees for their volunteering efforts.

[by the numbers]

Building the case for corporate volunteering

[continued from
previous page]

They also observed the following benefits of corporate volunteering programs were due to:

- The degree to which a company supports volunteerism directly impacts on employee recruitment, retention, morale and productivity.
- Employees gaining a sense of personal satisfaction from volunteering.
- Employees want to be provided with numerous and diverse opportunities to volunteer.
- Employees wanting as much information on each volunteer opportunity as possible.
- Employees prefer to volunteer in their own neighbourhoods and communities.
- Employees want to volunteer with their friends and family members.
- By supporting volunteerism, employees (and the company) learn about community needs/issues beyond those associated with a single event or organizations, and how to get involved and help-out.

What LBG Associates observe about the benefits of corporate volunteering is not just unique to Northern America.

In the United Kingdom, Arthur D. Little in *The Business Case for Corporate Responsibility*¹ written for Business in the Community, examined the benefits of corporate volunteering at British Gas' National Sales Centre in Cardiff.

These results come from a thorough evaluation by the company of its program following 1,000 hours of employee

time in the community. The study found:

- Higher Retention rates for individuals who volunteered.
- Improved rating as an "above average" place to work - to 63% from? The increase is the important figure
- Increased job satisfaction levels up to 69%.
- Increased advocacy rates - from 49 to 57% who would speak highly of the company.
- 28% of Action Day participants achieved promotion.
- Increased positive media coverage - 4.3 media "opportunities to see" generated.
- Absenteeism significantly reduced.
- Improved customer satisfaction ratings: two points above the stretch target.

Reasons for why these things occur are diverse. A couple of reasons could be, as quoted by Azim and McKinnon in *The Power of Giving: Creating Abundance in Your Home, at Work and in your Community*, is that: "people who exhibit higher levels of altruism get a "helper's high," a release of endorphins. Or it could be that as a British study found that one's health improves while volunteering, which can also lead to weight-loss.

Generation Y recruits (twenty-somethings) to Australian companies are living up to their international reputations by being both lifestyle oriented and socially responsible. In US companies they are also called the Echo-boomers with the conscience of their baby boomer parents coupled with some of the Generation X "me

[csr in action]

Companies:

Toyota, BJH Wines, Peter Michael's Seafood

Non-Profit partner:

Breakfree Foundation, NSW

Activity:

Sponsorship of ET's Beach Party, the major fundraising event for the foundation, which campaigns against the abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

¹ This report is downloadable as a PDF file from: <http://www.bitc.org.uk/document.rm?id=589>

[by the numbers]

Building the case for corporate volunteering

[continued from
previous page]

me” attitude. They are choosing to work in companies which offer both career prospects as well as a demonstrated commitment to corporate social responsibility.

One corporate affairs manager of a major Australian company said ” there is no question that our graduate recruits think our social investment activity is a defining criterion in choosing to work with us. They question senior management closely about whether the PR in annual reports is backed up by real action. They are confident, enquiring and want to be proud to tell their family and friends that they work for an ethical company whose values include sustainability and social action.”

Another CEO spoken to by Business Community Intelligence said that while statistics are not available in Australia his HR staff report that 4 out of 5 graduate interviewees know about the company’s record in working with the community and state this as one of the main reasons they want to work in his company.

Has your company undertaken research about your corporate volunteering? If so, please let Our Community know. By sharing that knowledge, we can all benefit and make our programs even more effective for our communities. ■

More information:

<http://www.thepowerofgiving.org/>
<http://www.bitc.org.uk/document.rm?id=589>

[csr in action]

Company:

Exxon-Mobil

Non-Profit partner:

Volunteering Australia

Activity:

Sponsorship of Volunteer Week including support for production of Volunteer Pack Managers of Volunteers to assist organisations to recruit, retain and recognise new volunteers.

Bringing domestic violence out of the shadows. Brisbane City Council leads a coalition of Queensland businesses in addressing a serious issue.



JUDE
MUNRO

Jude Munro has been the dynamic CEO of Brisbane City Council, the biggest local government in Australia with over 980,000 residents, for nearly five years, leading a workforce of over 7,500 employees and managing a budget of \$1.3 billion. In the past few years Brisbane City Council has taken a leading role in addressing the issues of domestic violence and has succeeded in bringing together a number of leading Brisbane businesses to provide support in efforts to curb domestic violence and also in dealing with its impact on the community.

Here JUDGE MUNRO explains why the Council and business chose domestic violence as a key area for a community partnership.

BCI: The obvious question - why domestic violence (DV)?

JUDE MUNRO: *The Age of 24/3/05* reported that Access Economics last year estimated domestic violence cost Australia \$8 billion a year in health expenditure, lost wages and other costs. It was the leading cause of death and disability for women aged 15-44 and Brisbane is no exception.

The Queensland Police Service recorded 66 victims of domestic homicides during 2003. Of these, 28 were victims of domestic and family violence.

From April 2002 to March 2003, there were 14,709 applications for Domestic Violence orders in Queensland. In the next year that number rose to 22,282.

In 2003, 4,500 Domestic Violence Orders were made in the greater Brisbane region. While in October, the Queensland domestic violence 24 hour help line received nearly 40% of its calls (or 333 calls) from Brisbane. One third came from women seeking a safe refuge from violence.

Also from research commissioned by Brisbane City Council (the first

such research in Australia), it was found that Domestic Violence costs Australian business \$1.5b per year through absenteeism, staff turnover, lost productivity etc.

BCI: It is not just the council involved in this project but also business. How have other businesses become involved in the issue of domestic violence?

JUDE MUNRO: In Brisbane, the City Council has helped establish 'Australia's CEO Challenge' which sets out to foster business-community partnerships. Businesses involved are Minter Ellison Lawyers, WATPAC, Clayton Utz, City Business Division in Council, Brisbane Water, Baxter Health Care, WearHousB for Fashion, GHD Consulting, Tarong Energy, Qantas, McCaffetys, Bennett Carroll and Gibbons solicitors, Tamawood Homes, and St Vincent's Hospital Toowoomba have just commenced a partnership.

These businesses have made contributions in many ways, from donations of things like providing a photocopier and service contract, to employee volunteer fundraising, to development of a literacy program for children in a Domestic Violence refuge,

[inside government]

Bringing domestic violence out of the shadows. Brisbane City Council leads a coalition of Queensland businesses in addressing a serious issue.

[continued from previous page]

to design and creation of a playground in a refuge.

Many of these businesses have also made the commitment to inform themselves about Domestic Violence, create opportunities to inform their staff and develop appropriate Human resource policies to enhance their ability to respond to staff affected by Domestic violence.

BCI: How is the BCC involved in tackling Domestic violence in the Brisbane area?

JUDE MUNRO: In three main ways:

- Through workplace initiatives - eg development of a Human Resources guideline and back up information for supervisors, staff awareness raising, development of an on-line staff training package, establishment of a cross-Council Domestic Violence Interest Group to build ownership and intelligence throughout Council;
- Community development initiatives - including grants to organisations building capacity at the local level, public awareness campaigns using bus advertising, trialling of new ways to achieve cross agency coordination at the local and district level and programs to help young people from violent families find new ways of relating;
- Corporate initiatives –Support for Australia's CEO Challenge is our key initiative here - it originated from our Lord Mayor's Women's Advisory Committee and Council has hosted a number of events with business leaders to engage them in DV prevention.

BCI: Who in your organisation has pushed/promoted/felt passionate about CSR?

JUDE MUNRO: Our Social Policy Branch is working on this and many Councillors and Lord Mayors have actively supported CSR initiatives. There are environmental parallels also - such as corporate support for volunteer catchment and bushland care groups.

BCI: What feedback have you had from staff about this partnership?

JUDE MUNRO: For the most part our workers are very positive about their involvement. It occurs at a sustainable level, they are confident that their contribution is well matched to the needs of their community partners and the awareness of domestic violence in the workforce is constantly growing.

There are also adverse reactions from time to time. Our workforce is diverse and represents a cross-section of the community - in other words we have domestic violence perpetrators on staff at times who feel uncomfortable about our policy approach.

BCI: What words of advice do you have to other city councils about corporate social responsibility?

JUDE MUNRO:

- One that it's an important opportunity;
- Build capacity within your council to be able to respond quickly to corporates who approach - it does take time, energy and a strategic approach; It's not a panacea;
- It's a supplement to all the

[inside government]

Bringing domestic violence out of the shadows. Brisbane City Council leads a coalition of Queensland businesses in addressing a serious issue.

[continued from previous page]

social programs we need in our communities - it can't replace them.

BCI: How do you evaluate your community involvement?

JUDE MUNRO: We do specific evaluations on initiatives we undertake. Overall we are doing well but are always looking for ways to improve our effectiveness.

BCI: Where to next?

JUDE MUNRO: In terms of Domestic Violence, a focus on young people and cultural diversity are still challenges we are pursuing.

In terms of GSR, we are having a serious look at how procurement and support for social enterprise can achieve significant social outcomes for Brisbane. .

For further information about the Brisbane domestic violence project or the CEO Challenge contact: spodc@brisbane.qld.gov.au or Helen Wallace on 07 3403 4733. ■

[csr in action]

Companies:

NSW Rugby and the HSBC Waratahs, Australian Rugby Union, Classic Wallabies, Seven Sport, Doltone House, Cassegrain Wines, Tooheys New and Hahn Premium Light, Carnegie Clark Golf, Classic Car Club, Golf Australia Magazine, Inside Rugby, Inside Sport, Let's Go Surfing, Pentaq Technology, The Royal Oak Balmain, Shoal Bay Resort & Spa, the Sydney Cricket & Sports Ground Trust and The Vintage Golf Club.

Non-Profit partner:

Activity:
Sponsorship of the Rugby Legends Lunch at which more than \$85,000 was raised to support the society's work in maximising the potential of people with disabilities.

Nation's Top Community Business Partnerships Recognised



THE PRIME MINISTER'S
COMMUNITY
BUSINESS
PARTNERSHIP

While nominations have now closed for the 2005 awards we detail the winners of the 2004 Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships which were announced recently.

Retail firms dominated a number of the categories as the winners of 2004 Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships were announced in Brisbane last month.

Senator Kay Patterson, Federal Minister for Family and Community Services and deputy chair of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, revealed the winning partnerships during a gala ceremony in Brisbane in April.

Winners of the small, medium and large business awards were drawn from 15 national finalists announced in mid-2004. The winning partnerships were named in five different categories.

Interestingly, winning partnerships in the medium business, large business and longevity categories all involved retail businesses.

The winners were:

Small Business

The Small Business Award was won by a Queensland based partnership between Bayside Recruitment and **BABI Youth and Family Support**, who provide care, guidance and support for homeless or at risk youths in the Wynnum/Redlands area of Brisbane

Medium Business

A South Australian based partnership between **Burns for Blinds and Youth**

Opportunities Association, who worked with young people from areas with low socio-economic demographics to help them gain skills, confidence and motivation through education.

Large Business

The Large Business Award was presented to **Woolworths, the Fred Hollows Foundation and the Wugularr Community** for establishing the Community Stores Program in the Northern Territory to improve the management of local stores, encourage the employment of Indigenous staff in remote communities, and improve financial literacy.

Impact on the Community

Mallesons Stephen Jaques won the special award for Impact on a Community in recognition of its multi-faceted national program aimed at alleviating poverty and improving community welfare, and helping to protect children and young people at risk through provision of free legal services, staff volunteering and workplace giving.

Longevity

The special award for Longevity was won by a partnership between **Avon Products Pty Ltd, the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group and YWCA Encore Program**, for working to increase

[inside government]

Nation's Top Community Business Partnerships Recognised

[continued from
previous page]

research, awareness, education and information about breast cancer since 1996. This partnership has made a real difference for women with its focus on reducing the incidence of breast cancer and supporting women who have had breast cancer surgery.

The other finalists in each of the categories were:

Small Business

- Virtual Cancer Centre.Com Pty Ltd with Silver Chain Nursing Association Inc
- Lo Tech Aquaculture with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and Warruwi Community Corporation

Medium Business

- Jacobs Sverdrup Australia with South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council and other partners
- PMI Mortgage Insurance Ltd with Habitat for Humanity Australia Inc

Large Business

- Greater Building Society with Mayumarri Trust
- Bakers Delight with Breast Cancer Network Australia
- ANZ Banking Group Ltd with The Brotherhood of St Laurence, Berry Street Victoria and The Benevolent Society

Impact on the Community

- Insurance Australia Group

Longevity

- The Shell Company of Australia Ltd with Questacon – the National Science and Technology Centre and the Australian National University
- WA Plantation Resources with Blackwood Waterwatch

For more information on the 2004 winners and finalists, follow This Link to the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnerships page at www.partnerships.gov.au. ■

[facts + figures]

94% of European company executives believe the development of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy can deliver real business benefits.

(Source: Ernst & Young, 2002)

Carrying the Standard for CSR

While work continues across the globe in developing the new international standard for social responsibility, CHRIS WAINWRIGHT outlines the current framework established by Standards Australia as a guide for companies trying to build a sustainable and successful CSR systems.

IN THE same way that everyone carries a unique DNA that sets them apart from the rest of the world, companies tend to develop their own internal DNA or set of individual organisational values that set them apart from other organisations.

So developing a single standard for all companies wanting to implement a corporate social responsibility program is a difficult task. As difficult as it is, Standards Australia (SA) have put together a Standard (AS8003 Corporate Social Responsibility) which is a good starting point for those either thinking about implementing a CSR program or reviewing their current program.

This Standard was finalised and released publicly in 2003 as part of a series of documents (Standards AS 8000 to 8004) which also included guideline Standards on:

- Good governance principles.
- Fraud and corruption control.
- Organisational codes of practice, and.
- Whistleblower protection programs.

According to Standards Australia, the aim of “AS 8003 Corporate Social Responsibility” is to:

- (a) provide the process for an entity to establish and maintain a culture of social responsibility through a committed, self regulatory approach; and
- (b) provide a framework for an effective

Corporate Social Responsibility Program, the performance of which can be monitored.

As SA spokesman Tom Godfrey explained, the Corporate Social Responsibility guiding Standard continues to be a benchmark document for many organisations wishing to set up their own CSR program.

“Certainly, the corporate governance series has been extremely popular, and many thousands have been distributed across the country if not internationally,” he said.

“At the time, the series was the first of its kind – there were no other consensus-based corporate governance documents that existed anywhere, and they have been very well received.

“As with all standards it was a fairly vigorous debate that took place on the committees (that developed the document). But the end document was something that was very beneficial and it continues to be in strong demand across Australia.”

Mr Godfrey said the documents were aimed at being as practical as possible.

“These are very practical documents. I’ve looked myself at the OECD principles – when you get the triple-bottom-line principles of being able to report on the social, the economic and the financial performance – they are very general and they are sort of just asking you to ask questions of the

[knowledge bank]

Carrying the Standard for CSR

[continued from
previous page]

organisation,” he said.

“These documents actually help guide organisations that want to develop a program. They are more informative in that sense; they are about encouraging and informing organisations that want to develop a CSR program.”

For a company to implement a successful corporate social responsibility program, Standards Australia states that they need to have:

- Support from board and senior management;
- A clear statement of the business’ commitment to CSR;
- Staff responsible for CSR need to be identified and given authority and resources so the initiatives can be properly put in place;
- A philosophy of continuous improvement needs to be put in place.

To make a corporate social responsibility management system work, Standards Australia identifies that the following operational elements also need to exist:

- Identification of the organisation’s CSR issues;
- A CSR operating manual;
- Implementation;
- Feedback System;
- Record-Keeping;
- Identification and Rectification;
- Reporting;
- Transparency;
- Stakeholder Engagement;
- Supervision;

- Policy and Procedures about Business Ethics.

To ensure that the CSR campaign is ongoing and remains a constant issue in the minds of the board, management and its employees, Standards Australia recommends that the following should occur:

- Education and Training;
- Regular communication about CSR issues and its current best practice;
- Monitoring and Assessment;
- Review;
- Ongoing involvement with entities that have a CSR interest, so that the business can keep itself informed about the latest developments in CSR issues and practice;
- Accountability;
- Independent assessment of the company’s CSR compliance.

AS8003 provides clear instructions and suggestions as to how a corporate social responsibility management plan can be implemented.

In short, the three things this Standard reinforces are:

1. the importance for all members of Board and staff to own the policy;
2. that the CSR policy and procedure documents are living, active and relevant ones; and
3. that one needs always to be aware of new ways to implement appropriate CSR best practices.

Standards AS 8000 to 8004 can be purchased as a set or individually online from Standards Australia online store (www.standards.com.au) ■

[csr in action]

Companies:

Waterbrook Lifestyle Resorts, Tooheys, Jaycar Electronics, Ella Bache, Cleantastic, Avcol Stockbroking, Blue Pyranees Estate and Chatswood Toyota

Non-Profit partner:

Sunshine House, NSW

Activity:

Sponsorship of a fundraising golf event at Monash Country Club, which raised more than \$22,000.

[the ethical dilemma]

[50]

Home or Away? The question of giving.

Each edition we will ask experts in the field to give their view on an ethical question in the area of corporate social responsibility or philanthropy.

In this first edition we look at the unprecedented response by individuals and businesses to the Asian Tsunami appeals where over \$300m was donated by businesses and individuals. It was an incredible response that was lauded by most but led to inevitable rumblings from some community organisations worried that causes closer to home would be forgotten.

We posed the question: Australians gave with unprecedented generosity to the Asian tsunami appeals. Shouldn't we all be concentrating on Australia's homeless, indigenous people, jobless and dispossessed?

The Ethicist's view: Associate Professor Janna Thompson, Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, Melbourne University



People are often accused of being sentimental or irrational in the giving of aid. They respond with sympathy to disaster, especially well publicised disasters, but are not so generous when it comes to long-term problems. They give generously to provide relief to the suffering, but are not so willing to contribute to solving the structural problems that cause suffering. In my view, the problem is not the irrationality of those who give aid. The problem is one of priorities in a world where so many people are in need.

In deciding who to aid and how to give it, a person or organisation is faced with a difficult choice between two important moral goals: beneficence and justice. Beneficence means providing benefits to people, relieving suffering and saving lives. Justice means ensuring that people are treated as equals in their relationships with others and by the institutions that affect their lives.

Most structural problems are caused by injustice, past or present. The deplorable conditions in which Aborigines live are the result of a long history of injustice. Homelessness has many causes, but lack of opportunity, inadequate access to medical and psychiatric care, and poverty play a central role.

Structural problems are often difficult to solve. No one knows what has to be done in order to ensure that Aborigines can live good, healthy lives, and that their communities can thrive. There are differences of opinion among both Aborigines and non-Aborigines about what these goals mean and how they can be achieved. There is no agreement on what policies would most effectively solve the problem of homelessness or unemployment. And attempts to solve structural problems sometimes fail.

Let us go back to the people who are deciding how to give aid. Their resources, however great, will always be woefully inadequate measured by the magnitude of the world's problems. They have to choose between beneficence and justice, between using their

[the ethical dilemma]

Home or Away? The question of giving.

[continued from
previous page]

resources to alleviate suffering and using them to tackle structural problems. They will be aware of the existence of a large numbers of people who desperately need help, who are likely to die if they don't get it. The tsunami victims are an obvious example. If the donors decide to concentrate on relieving the suffering of the desperately needy, they are not being sentimental. To help those whose lives are at stake is a laudable ethical response. They are not irrational. If funds are limited, as they always are, it seems better to concentrate on projects where you know you can do some good rather than on hard-to-solve structural problems.

But if all of those who give aid respond in this way, difficult structural problems that cause suffering will never be tackled. This is not only bad for the people concerned; it means that future people will also suffer.

The problem can only be solved if some organisations take justice as their priority. This does not preclude them from giving aid to the desperately needy, but the solution of structural problems should be their main area of responsibility. The organisations that should take this as their priority are those that are in the best position to tackle these problems.

Nations, especially in the developed world, are in this position. They have the wealth and power to make fundamental and effective changes to institutions. Australian citizens should insist that their government take as a priority solving problems of justice like homelessness and Aboriginal disadvantage – not because Australians should care about other Australians more than they care about Indonesians, but because ensuring that its institutions and policies are just is the first task of a nation.

The Community Sector view: Rae Walter, President Western Australian Council of Social Services

As understanding of the magnitude of the Asian Tsunami unfolded, Australians opened their hearts and spontaneously dug deep into their pockets to give generously to the victims of this natural disaster. This is in line with previous experience showing that Australians do give more generously during a crisis – both in monetary terms and through volunteer effort. It is also despite a growing gap between the levels of funding needed by charities at home where amounts collected are only just keeping pace with the rate of inflation and the need for volunteer support is unable to be met.

How we care about people's fundamental needs raises questions about the kind of community in which we want to live, our concern for a fair go for people who are disadvantaged, how we respect and honour individuals and what we see as our obligation to care and protect individual human rights and diversity. It provides an interesting point for reflection in our individualised post modern society.

With increasing demands on the resources of Australian community organisations both now and in the future, the survival of many agencies will be dependent on the ability to fundraise and to attract and retain volunteers.

[csr in action]

Companies:

*Hill's Science Diet,
Moose Enterprise*

Non-Profit partner:

RSPCA

Activity:

*Sponsorship of the
Million Paws Walk*

[the ethical dilemma]

Home or Away? The question of giving.

[continued from
previous page]

Does this mean that we should not contribute generously to the victims of the tsunami or other natural disasters?

To the contrary. Solidarity with our fellow humans who are struck by any type of disaster is to be applauded. Indeed, it would seem that we need to nurture an ethic of philanthropy and extend charitable support and involvement to the wider range of ongoing, endemic needs in our community.

And perhaps this gives a clue to our future. That it will be one in which we care for one another in addition to caring for ourselves and where we will not only be concerned for our own needs but also our obligations and responsibilities towards others.

The question for us all both now and in the future is, "How are we going to develop an informed response so that when we act, we will bring considered action to all instances of disadvantage and suffering?"

The Global view: John Dalziel – Communications Director Salvation Army Australia

The Salvation Army has seen an increase in giving to both our work in Australia and in Tsunami affected countries. In January we sent a letter to thousands of our occasional donors and gave them a choice of giving to either our work in Australia and victims of the tsunami. The result was that two thirds gave an increased amount to our Australian work and one third gave to our work overseas for the first time.

The graphic news pictures of tsunami victims has been backed up by an Asian Development Bank report which estimates that an additional two million people have been thrown into poverty as a result of the Tsunami.

Australians have given directly more than \$200 million and our government has given a billion. This was a very appropriate response.

The other side is that Australians have seen that they are rich and the needs in Australia of those who are living below the poverty line are very real. Our government also recognises this and last year more than 44% (\$80 billion) of Commonwealth expenditure was spent on welfare. We have been reminded by the tsunami that we have a responsibility as citizens of the world for all people, our own and those in other countries as well.

This is a good beginning but we should be doing more both as private citizens and as a nation. We should honour our undertaking to give 0.7% of our GNP to overseas aid (currently it is 0.2%) It is to be hoped that we don't have to have a tsunami every year to encourage us to give both to our neighbours and to our growing number of dispossessed people in Australia. ■

[csr in action]

Companies:

BP Australia

Non-Profit partner:

Clean Up Australia

Business Day

Activity:

More than 120 BP staff volunteered to take part in the day, removing a large amount of rubbish including car bodies, furniture and plastics.

Michael Chaney, Retiring CEO, Wesfarmers



MICHAEL CHANEY

MICHAEL CHANEY has been CEO of Wesfarmers, WA's largest company for over a decade. In that time he has established both himself and his company and its 30,000-strong workforce, as among the most generous philanthropists not just in WA but across Australia. He is a fervent believer that the Wesfarmers philosophy is not only good for the community but good for business – or as he explains it “enlightened self-interest.” In this interview with **DRANNIE DUNCAN**, Michael Chaney, who will soon retire to take on the role as Chair of the National Australia Bank explains how.

BCI: Tell us what community activities does Wesfarmers participate in?

Michael Chaney: We regard our main contribution to the community as the operation of a successful and ethical business which creates employment opportunities, delivers good returns to its owners and provides safe and rewarding workplaces for its employees. In addition, we provide significant direct support to organisations in areas such as the arts, medical research and education.

BCI: What evidence do you have that these activities have been of benefit to the community or for your company?

Michael Chaney: It's a bit hard to be precise but I know that our support for medical research in Western Australia, for instance, has been instrumental in research bodies here attracting high quality people who have produced world-leading work.

I have no doubt that our approach to corporate social responsibility is an important part of us having a good reputation – and that's priceless.

With regard to our support of the arts we do carry out a rigorous analysis of its effectiveness through surveys etc and have concluded that it has been very

successful in enhancing Wesfarmers' reputation.

Are these activities “purely” philanthropic or do you consider the business case like in other parts of the business?

Michael Chaney: What we do benefits the community and helps our reputation – you could describe it as enlightened self interest.

BCI: Who makes the choice of program to support?

Michael Chaney: We have a three person group which considers requests for support and recommendations go to the Board for approval.

BCI: Which activities do your staff participate in?

Michael Chaney: At the business unit level there's a whole range of things our people get involved in. A good example was the great turnout by Bunnings employees in running a giant sausage sizzle to raise more than \$230,000 to assist victims of the tsunami disaster.

BCI: Do your CSR activities improve how recruits and other staff view the company? How do you know that?

Michael Chaney: There is no doubt,

[the ceo on csr]

Michael Chaney, CEO, Wesfarmers

[continued from
previous page]

from what we are told by people joining the group, that our reputation as a good corporate citizen is an important component in us being seen as an employer of choice.

BCI: Do your customers participate in any of your CSR activities? Any advice for other companies trying to get their companies involved?

Michael Chaney: There is certainly periodic customer involvement through the activities engaged in by Bunnings and that's an important part of helping that business relate to the community.

BCI: This issue is about volunteering. What do you personally do as a volunteer for the community?

Michael Chaney: I've had a long involvement with fundraising for community-benefiting groups, particularly in the areas of medical research and the arts.

As many parents do I took on responsibilities at the school our children attended. A major current commitment is as President of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, working with Professor Fiona Stanley on coordinating work aimed at improving physical and intellectual outcomes for young people in our community.

BCI: What is the most important lesson you have learned in CSR?

Michael Chaney: Simply that taking these issues seriously and doing something to help is extremely beneficial to

both the community and to the company.

BCI: What has been the best activity you have been involved in? Which is best forgotten?

Michael Chaney: I wouldn't like to single out any particular organisation, cause or project with which we've been involved. But generally speaking I think our support for medical research has been of immense value. I can't honestly recall anything that comes in the 'best forgotten' category. ■

[csr in action]

Companies:

McDonald's

Non-Profit partner:

Community

Activity:

National Volunteer

Week; on presentation of their volunteer

identification, volunteers

could pick up a free deli choices roll on one day in volunteer week.

Promoting individual and business involvement

The number of organisations trying to match volunteers with community groups continues to grow both here and overseas. Here **CHRIS RICHES** details some new initiatives.

Businesses and Community Groups hit Speed Dating Scene

BUSINESSES and community groups looking to establish a perfect match have turned to the “speed-dating” scene to quicken the process.

London-based charitable group and brokerage service City Match recently trialled a pioneering concept aimed at encouraging City businesses to find their community group “perfect match” that they could partner with to fulfil their corporate volunteering objectives.

Set up by the Corporation of London, the business authority for the area around the centre of London, City Match recently brought together about 25 of the area’s corporates to meet with 12 local community groups who were seeking volunteers.

City Match spokeswoman Johanna Davies said each corporate representative had two minutes at each community stand before the whistle was blown and they moved to the next group.

If the corporate was interested in a particular group, City Match then acts in its usual capacity as a broker to develop the match. Ms Davies said the format allowed the community groups to meet the maximum number of corporates to maximise their chances of “making a match.”

She said City Action had also deliberately limited the numbers of those attending so it would not be too much for the community groups.

Although they had not yet reviewed the success of the event, Ms Davies said City Action, which a database of over 1,500 businesses and community groups, had been approached to hold more “speed dating” events.

14 corporates join forces to show Melbourne CARES

FOURTEEN corporate partners have joined with the Committee for Melbourne to support the introduction of a city-based corporate volunteering organisation, Melbourne CARES.

The initiative, modelled on the UK’s Business in the Community model, aims to broker corporate volunteers with business skills and experience with community groups in desperate need of those skills.

The co-ordinator of Melbourne CARES, Simon Robinson was seconded from the Business in the Community in the UK to bring the project to Australia and aims to increase corporate support of community partners and increase the level of employee volunteering, leading to a positive effect on the city’s image. The program, which was launched by Prince Charles, who is the patron of the British equivalent, has drawn wide support from Melbourne’s top-end

[what's new]

Promoting individual and business involvement

of town. As well as including media partners, The Age and Channel Seven, CARES has also drawn support from Macquarie Bank, ANZ, Accenture, Rio Tinto, Amcor, Connell Wagner, Cadbury Schweppes, City of Melbourne, Ambit Group of Companies, Medicare Private, Melbourne Football Club, and the Department for Victorian Communities

Robinson says CARES is now working with its 14 founding businesses to begin the process of volunteering and reinforcing the business case for community involvement with tangible outcomes. The first step is developing programs involving the founding partners before extending the program to other Melbourne businesses that don't have the resources to sign on as partners.

Organisations can register to be involved at www.melbournecares.org.au or contact Simon Robinson srobinson@melbourne.org.au Committee for Melbourne Milton House Level 2, 25 Flinders Lane Mel. VIC 3000 Tel: (03) 9650 8800

Greypower becomes Greatcompany

Much of the volunteering initiatives around the corporate scene are based around younger individuals but a new scheme is aimed at seniors who have the skills, experience and expertise and want to give something back.

But Goodcompany (www.goodcompany.com.au), the website that has been matching young professional volunteers with the necessary skills needed to match community group wishes, is now looking

to expand to the over-50s market.

With a grant from the Victorian Government, goodcompany is setting up greatcompany which will recruit and match over 50s employees and volunteers who want to give something back to the community sector.

Since its inception, goodcompany has generated more than \$4.5 million worth of professional services to not for profit groups across Australia. It currently co-ordinates 1800 registered volunteers and 190 community groups through its online service.

The move into the over-50s market was the brainchild of Lynn Landy, the wife of the Victorian Governor John Landy. Ms Landy says she feels very strongly that there is no such thing as retirement, just a change in direction.

For more information or to become a volunteer go to:

www.goodcompany.com.au ■

Making a big difference with a few dollars

Corporates are always in search of a project that can make a difference. DRANNIE DUNCAN finds a playground that has largely been ignored by business but is putting smiles on the faces of hundreds of children and their parents each week. It's not the usual CSR project for business, but here's one example where a few dollars could make a huge difference.

Some playgrounds are just places for kids to play. You know the type of thing – safe rubber swings, climbing frames, a sand pit and a very gentle slide. Others are much more than that and are an essential “home away from home” for kids who need the space to hang out as well as the comfort and attention of the staff.

One such playground is Skinners Playground in Dorcas St, South Melbourne which is not only a fun place for kids to play but also provides a real community hub for many locals, including the hundreds of families who live in the nearby Housing Commission units and who lack any safe space to play.

Someone who has promoted the work of Skinners Playground – and similar community playgrounds – is Age journalist Peter Wilmoth who wrote a feature article on the park after a visit where he was amazed at its impact the park and its staff had on both his own children and also the other kids in the neighbourhood.

“Skinners is a great place, with nooks and crannies, where kids can hang out with their friends, it’s like a community drop-in centre,” Wilmoth says.

“It’s right in the shadow of a huge Ministry of Housing apartment building and kids can come in, meet with their friends, make some toast in the kitchen, and sit and talk to the caring staff. These playgrounds fill a vacuum. All

kids need to be singled out for special attention and if they don’t get it at home or at school they can get it at the playground. I believe these playgrounds are a social necessity.”

He said in one area a fantastic community policeman drops in every now and then to keep an eye on the playground and share a joke with the kids.

While Wilmoth isn’t spruiking for corporate support for the playgrounds he is adamant that they are well worth supporting.

“These playgrounds really make a difference. They’re unrecognised but they’re a perfect example of community values – communities working together on the ground,” he said.

One of those helping to make a difference is Sal Lolicarto, an artist and sculpturer who works at both Skinners and St Kilda playgrounds, running art projects like the plaster casting of hundreds of kids’ hands as well as cooking – and listening to the kids’ stories.

He believes that the kids in the playgrounds “see the magic process of transformation” that creative play is all about. His goal in working at the playgrounds is to make the kids feel good, to feel they have contributed and to inspire them to be creative.

[in focus]

Making a big difference with a few dollars

[continued from
previous page]

He believes the playgrounds are a real meeting place for kids from high rise housing commission flats –it’s their backyard, their garden. They keep chooks, learn to cook the vegies they cultivate and often grow up playing at Skinners all their lives.

He is one who believes a corporate funder could make a substantial difference, providing a creative outlet and opportunity for many kids in the area.

Some of the community playgrounds making a difference:

Urban Adventures Melbourne’s community playgrounds

St Kilda Adventure Playground

A “big backyard” that includes ponds, trampolines, sporting equipment, bikes cubbies, flying foxes, a maze, tepees, a toboggan ramp, sandpits, climbing structures, and chooks. Supervised at all times by two staff.
Neptune St, St Kilda Phone 03 9209 6348

Skinners Adventure Playground

Offers ropes, climbing sculptures, an in-ground trampoline, a go-cart, a garden, three ponds, a creek, a ball court area, and chooks.
211a Dorcas St (between 209 and 211), South Melbourne Phone 9209 6352.

“The Venny” Kensington Adventure Playground

You’ll find a castle, a rocket, cubbies and trampolines. There’s also a veggie patch, and animals including chooks, ducks, goats and guinea pigs. Indoors there’s healthy food for kids every day, computers, art and craft materials and pool tables. There are always two staff supervising.
85 Kensington Rd, Kensington Phone 9376 0589.

“Cubbies” Fitzroy Adventure Playground

Paint, build cubbies, do some gardening, use the play equipment and swings, help look after the animals (ducks, chickens and one goose) or join a game of football or cricket. Supervised.
Condell St, Fitzroy (opposite the police station) Phone 9419 0377.

Prahran Adventure Playground

Serving as a safe backyard for the housing estate kids, there’s plenty of open space here to play soccer and take part in organized games. A daily ‘walking bus’ ensures kids eat a good breakfast and lunch at the playground, and that they get to school safely in the morning.
2 Simmons St, South Yarra (close to corner of Chapel) Phone 8290 2080.

[csr in action]

Companies:

Macquarie Bank, Seven, Medibank Private, City of Melbourne, Melbourne Demons Football Club, Connell Wagner, Department for Victorian Communities, The Age, Ambit Group of Companies, Cadbury Schweppes

Non-Profit partner:

Melbourne Cares; Committee for Melbourne & Pilotlight Australia

Activity:

Founded of Cares in Melbourne, the pilot for Australia; a model of flexible corporate volunteering in which employees choose from a variety of volunteering activities and times from a menu at Cares Online.

[outside the square]

[59]

Encouraging CSR managers to look “outside the square” for ideas, projects and partners that might be worth of consideration.

One of the common features of many Australian corporate volunteering programs is that the bigger the company, the bigger the community partner they tend to choose.

In this section Our Community CEO DR RHONDA GALBALLY encourages CSR managers to look “outside the square” for ideas, projects and partners that might be worth of consideration.

I - Blood Banks

A great way for a large number of employees at your organisation to make a difference is for them to volunteer their time by giving blood.

The Australian Red Cross Blood Service is always in need of blood to ensure that their blood supplies remain in line with increasing demand – especially around holiday periods.

Employees could give blood en-masse if close to a mobile or static collection point, or could give blood at a time and location that best suits them.

Contact: Australian Red Cross Blood Service on 13 14 95.

Website: www.arcbs.redcross.org.au

2 – Art, History, Heritage and the Performing Arts

Facilities like museums, art galleries, and performing arts centres are often in need of volunteer help.

That type of help could come in the form of:

- Guides.
- “Ambassadors”.
- Ushers, or.
- General Helpers.

Many of the larger such facilities have their own websites where they can ask for volunteers – for example, this page at the Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art’s website: www.mca.com.au/default.asp?page_id=43e

Contact: Refer to a local or state-based facility via phone or website, or search the listings at GoVolunteer.

Website: GoVolunteer - www.govolunteer.com.au

[outside the square]

Encouraging CSR managers to look “outside the square” for ideas, projects and partners that might be worth of consideration.

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3 – Crisis-line Support

An organisation like LifeLine – a 24-hour telephone counselling service for those in need of support – is always in need of volunteers to “man the phones”.

Employees from your organisation could volunteer their time to help at one of LifeLine’s call centres, as more than 10,000 people do each year. Not only that, but LifeLine also offers training in a number counselling and intervention areas.

Contact: LifeLine can be contacted via its website.

Website: www.lifeline.org.au - and for contact details for your local Lifeline Centre, use the “Local Centre Search” facility at the home page.

4 – Respite Care

More and more people in Australian society are acting as carer to their own relatives – relatives who may have a disability or who may be elderly and frail.

Caring for a loved one in these circumstances is a demanding and often challenging role, and there will be times that dedicated carers like these need a break.

This is where respite care comes in. Having your employees involved in respite care – or launching a respite care volunteer program at your business – can allow hard-working carers a break from their duties, as well as offer an enriching experience for your staff.

Contact: A number of local, state and national organisations – from councils and local government to organisations like the Red Cross – operate respite care programs. For more information, consider contacting your local council or MP, or use an Internet search engine to find a program close to you.

Website: The Federal Department of Health and Ageing’s contact details – as well as information on respite care – can be found at this website:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/Contact+the+Department-1>

5 – Local Schools and Kinders

Another way your employees can get involved by volunteering in their local community is through helping at their child’s school or kinder.

Also, making a commitment by helping on the school or kindergarten’s council/

[outside the square]

Encouraging CSR managers to look “outside the square” for ideas, projects and partners that might be worth of consideration.

[continued from previous page]

committee is an even better way of having a real say in the facility and its place in the community.

Companies which have staff serving like this should offer them time allowances – possibly through time-in-lieu – in relation to the hours they put in on such boards and committees.

Contact: The best way to find out if your school or kindergarten could do with some help is to approach it yourself. You may already know whether any assistance is required if your child attends the school or kinder in question.

6 – Local Festival Boards and Committees

If your organisation is serious about getting employees involved in volunteering why not let them use their expertise on board or committee of their local festival or annual show.

Towns and suburbs across Australia run festivals and shows each year, so your organisation could look to have its employees approach these festivals’ organising committees and volunteer for a position that best suits their abilities (or the abilities their employer wants them to gain more experience in or work on).

Events that bring visitors are not only good for the local community but good for business.

Contact: A good place to start might be for staff to approach their local festival or show organising committee to see if they can join up. Another option is to have a look at the listings and vacancies on Our Community’s Board Matching Service.

Website: The Board Matching Service can be found here:

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/boards/boards_article.jsp?articleId=1522

7 – State Emergency Service or Rural Fire Brigades

The work that rural fire brigades and State Emergency Service units do is invaluable when disasters or emergencies strike.

But instead of making a donation to one of these units or brigades, why not encourage your staff to volunteer and join up.

There are SES units right around Australia, with each state and territory having its own service. Meanwhile, rural fire brigades remain an important part of rural and regional Australian society.

It is important those who do volunteer have the support of their workplaces, as they

[outside the square]

Encouraging CSR managers to look “outside the square” for ideas, projects and partners that might be worth of consideration.

[continued from previous page]

have no say when a fire, a flood or storm will require their service.

Contact and Website: Each state’s SES or equivalent service has a web page. They can be found at the Australian Council of State and Territory Emergency Services website at <http://www.acses.org.au/About.aspx>. For rural-area fire brigades, a search on the Internet or in local directories will find your nearest brigade.

8 – Local Committees, Boards or Organising Groups

Every local government area has committees, groups and other boards – either formal or more informal – that look after everything from traffic management issues to consulting on local laws, the environment, arts, sports, special interest issues ... the list is endless.

Encouraging staff to join up, join in and voice their opinions or support their local communities can be a great way to not only have staff volunteer, but have them contribute to their local area.

Contact: The best way to find out if there are any such committees or groups seeking members in your area is to contact your local council. Alternatively, there may be some vacancies listed on Our Community’s Board Matching Service.

Website: The Board Matching Service can be found here:
http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/boards/boards_article.jsp?articleId=1522

9 – Sporting Clubs

Many of your employees would be playing for, have played for, or have children playing for, a sporting team of some sort. Many may already volunteer their time to help out “down at the club”, but your organisation could encourage all staff to find a local sporting club and get involved at some level.

It could be as a marshal, touch judge or goal umpire, or it could be at another level up – helping as a treasurer, secretary or event organiser.

Contact: Again, it is best to start in each staff member’s local area, with local council and local directories containing contact details for that area’s sporting organisations.

[outside the square]

Encouraging CSR managers to look “outside the square” for ideas, projects and partners that might be worth of consideration.

[continued from previous page]

10 – Workplace Big Days Out

Twice a year, the BAC (Business and Community)-Links Team in Geelong, Victoria, stages the popular Workplace Big Day Out.

The Workplace Big Days Out are held in the Geelong region in July and December and involves workplace volunteers supporting, having fun and actively participating in a range of activities alongside people with a disability for a day.

Workplace volunteers are supported by trained staff. The Big Days Out are seen as a pathway for businesses to become actively involved in supporting their community in the context of the triple bottom line and corporate social responsibility.

But if your business isn't in the Geelong area, maybe you can consult with your local volunteer resource centre or volunteer referral service on getting involved in a similar program.

Contact: BAC-Links can be contacted on (03) 5249 6118. A useful index of volunteer resource centres or referral services can be found at:

<http://www.govolunteer.com.au/about/content/network.htm> ■

Where to get help about corporate volunteering?

We are not only trying to raise the issues, but we also like to help as many organisations as possible to implement best partnership practices. Thus, in each edition we will provide resource suggestions in our column, Where to get help?

If you have other suggestions or good or bad news stories about our advice, please don't hesitate to let us know about them at annied@ourcommunity.com.au.

WEBSITES:

1. Our Community

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au>

The Our Community Matching Service for the Boards, Committees & Governance Centre is aimed at:

- Individuals looking to make a stronger connection with their community by joining a Board or Committee of Management;
- Workplace volunteering programs looking to make a long-lasting difference to their communities by putting their hand up to join a Board or Committee of management; and
- Community group Boards or Committees of Management who are looking for new members.

2. Volunteering Australia

<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org>

This is the website of Australia's peak body for volunteering, Volunteering Australia. On this website there is a pile of information, opportunities, as well as a library of resources. Their web page describing the Engage campaign about corporate volunteering, (www.volunteeringaustralia.org/employ_home.html) has a number of informative PDF downloadable documents.

3. Prime Ministers' Community Business Partnership

<http://www.partnerships.gov.au>

Since the mid 1990s, the Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet with the assistance of other federal ministerial portfolios have been advocating the importance of community business partnerships, CSR and volunteering. On this site a number of useful publications and fact sheets about volunteering can be downloaded.

[resources]

Where to get help about corporate volunteering

[continued from
previous page]

4. GoVolunteer

<http://www.govolunteer.com.au>

GoVolunteer is an initiative of Volunteering Australia. It is Australia's first national volunteer recruitment website. It provides opportunities for those wishing to volunteer and free Internet advertising for not-for-profit community organisations looking for volunteers.

5. goodcompany

<http://www.goodcompany.com.au>

goodcompany targets 25 - 45 year old time-poor young professionals who are keen to get involved in the community, but do not know where to start. They make it easy for busy professionals to participate through their annual launch event, face to face forums and the use of IT which makes participation easy as pie!

6. Business in the Community

http://www.bitc.org.uk/voluntary_public/index.html

This section of Britain's very detailed Business in the Community website is dedicated to volunteering. For companies looking at global trends, methodologies and may be worldwide volunteering projects, this is a must visit website!

7. Melbourne Cares

<http://www.melbournecares.org.au>

As the name suggests it's a Melbourne-based organisation. Associated with Britain's Business in the Community, they facilitate collaborative action between businesses, government and communities to tackle social and economic issues. Cares is a partnership solution for cities and other geographical communities wishing to engage employers in building quality of life and social capital. Organisations can register on their website to participate in Melbourne Cares' project.

8. National Volunteer Skills Centre

<http://www.nvsc.org.au/>

A newish website designed to encourage through skills training the professionalism of work undertaken by volunteers. A number of resources are being developed, as well as Certificate level courses. While most corporate volunteers have the essential skills to volunteer, there will may be junior employees or staff members who by undertaking one of those courses may feel more comfortable about volunteering.

[csr in action]

Companies:

Holden

Non-Profit partner:

Parents

Activity:

Holden extended its free child restraint inspection service to Tasmania.

Holden already runs a mobile inspection service in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, which checked more than 1,200 child seats and baby capsules in 2004.

[resources]

Where to get help about corporate volunteering

[continued from
previous page]

9. Conservation Volunteers

<http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au>

Got an employee or friend who can't stop talking about their green-fingered exploits? If that's the case, then Conservation Volunteers with their land rehabilitation projects, could be the ideal volunteering project for them.

10. Australian Volunteer Search

<http://www.volunteersearch.gov.au>

The Commonwealth Government as part of their overall employment search website has set up a section designed primarily for jobseekers to gain volunteer experience. This website is not completely functioning for Apple Macintosh users.

PUBLICATIONS:

Business Cases

Corporate Community Involvement: Establishing a Business Case

Downloaded in two parts:

<http://www.partnerships.gov.au/pdf/ccipart1.pdf>

<http://www.partnerships.gov.au/pdf/ccipart2.pdf>

The Business Case for Corporate Responsibility

<http://www.bitc.org.uk/document.rm?id=589>

Volunteering

Corporate Shares Community Profits: a guide to engaging your employees

http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/documents/CorpSharesCommProfitsCORP_001.pdf

Corporate Shares Community Profits: a guide to engaging corporate volunteers

http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/documents/CorpSharesCommProfitsORG_001.pdf

Corporate Volunteerism: Innovative Practices

http://www.lbg-associates.com/Publications%20%26%20Reports/Corporate%20Volunteerism%20Innovative%20Practices%20for%20the%2021st%20Century/corporate_volunteerism.html

The Power of Giving

<http://www.thepowerofgiving.org/downloads/thepowerofgiving.pdf> ■

The Top Ten Discussion Starters

In each issue of **Business Community Intelligence** we give a summary of some of the major themes discussed which can be used as a discussion starter at your next meeting on **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**.

These are not designed to be the final word in a conversation but to enable **Human Resources, CSR or Public Affairs** managers to look at some of the issues impacting on a company's successful implementation of **CSR**.

CSR & Corporate Volunteering's Top 10 Lessons

1. According to ACCC chairman Graeme Samuel:

"Corporate social sensibility is a business imperative as well as an altruistic nicety. It is not so much about cheques as it is about attitudes, social involvement, and sensible, socially responsive business management. A business community that abjures social sensibility runs the risk that governments will intervene to address the community's needs through regulatory requirements. This is the nature of the government beast, and is not without significant cost."

- **Does your organisation have a CSR program?**
- **And has your organisation considered the possible costs of not engaging in a meaningful way with the community within which you operate?**

2. There is a divide between running a corporate volunteering initiative that fulfils the company's needs of giving employees the opportunity of coming together to make a difference and a community group's needs of getting the best use of the skills you have to offer. The best schemes are those that bridge that divide.

- **Does your volunteering scheme make the best use of your employee's skills?**
- **Does your volunteering work where you tell the group you have volunteers and ask them to prepare a task OR do you ask the group to consider how best they could use your people's skills and then find the volunteers to match?**

3. While people might want to get together to have fun, the best corporate volunteering is using your skillset to make a fundamental and sustainable difference to a community organisation. Most groups can afford \$15 an hour for a gardener. Where they struggle is finding a lawyer or accountant without having to pay upwards of \$150 an hour.

- **Does your program encourage volunteers to take up ongoing involvement with your community partner?**
- **Does your program have the flexibility to allow employees to volunteer when the community group most needs their expertise?**

[take ten]

The Top Ten Discussion Starters

[continued from
previous page]

4. Employees expect that a CSR initiative is consistent with the values that the company also displays internally. The success of a CSR scheme is influenced by the extent to which the company culture actually embraces and promotes the same notion of fairness, team-building and social responsibility within the company.
 - **Does your CSR program and the values you show to the outside world sit comfortably with your attitudes to your own staff?**
 - **Would your employees rate you as highly as a “good corporate citizen” as the public or your community partners do?**
 - **Do you regularly ask your employees how they rate you as an “employer of choice?”**

5. A number of corporates say their Human Resources managers are increasingly quizzed by graduates and job applicants as to what they are doing in the area of CSR. One manager said nearly three quarters of new recruits said the company’s CSR record had a big impact on their decision whether to work for the organisation.
 - **How much does corporate citizenship rate for your graduates or new employees?**
 - **Have you instituted any measures or process that could evaluate your standing as an “Employer of Choice?”**

6. Overseas research shows that Corporate volunteering programs can improve employee satisfaction anywhere between 20 and 69% (BUPA & The Business Case for Corporate Responsibility).
 - **As part of your CSR program do you evaluate your employees’ satisfaction rates?**
 - **Have you measured the satisfaction/retention rates of those taking part in programs against staff who choose not to?**

7. The last time a survey was taken on business generosity in the community, 40% of Australian businesses said they still did not undertake any form of community partnership (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Business Generosity Survey 2001)
 - **Where does your company sit in relation to community partnerships?**
 - **Is this attitude shared by your management team/Board?**
 - **Have you noticed change in attitudes to community partnerships and CSR programs within your company?**

[csr in action]

Company:

The Swan Brewery

Non-Profit partner:

Community

Activity:

Donated beer to a number of RSL Clubs across Western Australia on ANZAC Day.

[take ten]

The Top Ten Discussion Starters

[continued from
previous page]

8. Westpac has observed that their recognised CSR successes make them an employer of choice and that good CSR gives market advantage.
- **Does your company evaluate the commercial benefits of your CSR work?**
 - **How much of a benefit (if it is) do you estimate it brings your organisation?**
 - **Have you been asked to justify in commercial terms the value of your CSR program to the bottom line?**
 - **What methods do you have in place to do this?**
9. Companies often refer to the various reputation indices according to where they rate on the index?
- **Does your company take notice of the various reputation measuring systems?**
 - **Do you make decisions or tweak your systems based on what other companies do?**
10. The decision to support Tsunami appeals was one that not only gripped businesses but also hundreds of thousands of individuals across Australia.
- **Does your company have a giving plan? And how is it decided?**
 - **Is the decision to give a top-down Board decision or are employees and staff members given flexibility and responsibility to assist in determining how and where your corporate dollars are spent?**
 - **Has your organisation debated where it believes the money is best spent (i.e. with major charities or with local groups in the areas in which you operate, or a mix of both?) ■**

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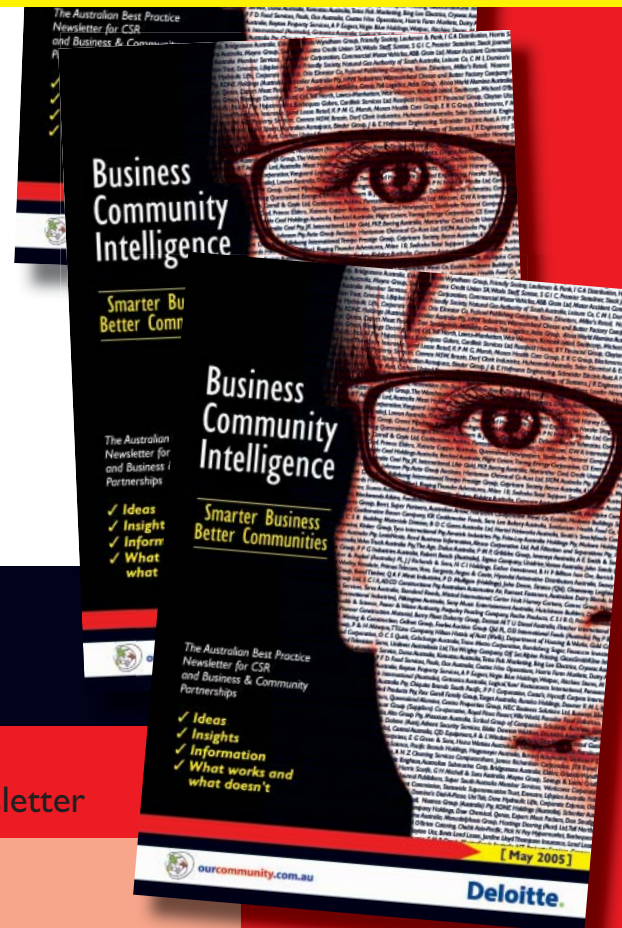
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