

# Our Community **MATTERS**

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



## Resources, News, Innovations and Tips on:

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

[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

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Welcome to the latest edition of **Our Community Matters**, your regular free community sector update. It is yet another benefit of membership of [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) – the premier destination for Australia's 700,000 community, education and not-for-profit groups. Our Community provides community groups with the latest funding and fundraising news as well as practical management, board, marketing and community business partnership information. Our Community also operates the **Australian Giving Centre**, the free online donations service that has so far raised almost \$5 million for Australian community appeals. A summary of our services is listed at the end of this newsletter. If you have trouble reading this newsletter or have any comments please let us know by emailing [kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au)

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## 1. Community View ... By Rhonda Galbally AO, CEO of [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

### Tell us What Works!

In 1992 I was CEO of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) – a grantmaking body using \$30 million of grants to promote health. I thought that all of us at VicHealth were doing a great job pioneering new ideas, new strategies and ways of promoting health – we were beginning to receive worldwide accolades for our work – except from one person.

Professor Nancy Milio, then from the University of North Carolina, came to review us. I expected to receive the same flattering report – confirming the fact that we were doing an excellent job.

Instead Nancy dropped a bombshell, telling us we were wasting our funds – even though most of the projects and programs we were funding were innovative and important.

“Contradictory!” I thought angrily. “How can the project we fund be important and yet still we are not doing a good job?”

Then I came down from my high horse and actually listened to what she had to say.

While you might think that \$30 million is a lot to be giving out in grants, she told us, it is actually completely insignificant if every grant is an isolated event.

The value in making grants is to learn from the experience of how the project was designed, how the project was agreed to, and how the project was delivered and rolled out – not to describe the project itself. Case studies are endlessly boring and repetitive.

The real value is in the telling of the story of the project – the ups and downs, the strategies, what works and what doesn't – so that others can actually learn from each experience. That way, every grant adds enormous value to the community – not because the finite project itself is a success or not, but because we learn as we go.

Ron Labonte (now at the University of Ottawa) later came to VicHealth with much the same idea – to teach us to learn from the stories of the projects funded by our grants. He has designed a particular method to interrogate project roll out – and again it's about extracting the lessons - what works, what doesn't and why.

Later still I learned that this was the basis of participative or action research. Penny Hawe (now at the University of Calgary) taught us ways to apply action research to evaluating projects we gave grants to – changing them and adapting them as they rolled out and especially sharing the learnings.

So 14 years later – and in conjunction with Professor Meredith Minkler (the mother of participative research at the University of California Berkeley) and Len Syme (my mentor and inspiration on the value of community participation – also at the University of California Berkeley) – these ideas are now being used to develop the [Lessons Bank](#) as part of Our Community's new [Centre for What Works](#).

The Lessons Bank will house the key knowledge and hard-won truths accumulated through thousands of projects carried out around Australia, building over time and emerging as a fully indexed, searchable database of lessons – an invaluable resource for community organisations, and grants managers.

The Lessons Bank forms an important pillar of the Centre for What Works – a new area of the Our Community website that provides a place of people to learn from others, save time and money and help reduce duplication of effort. The other three pillars are:

1. [The Plans and Tools Bank](#) – where you can download useful plans or handy tools (marketing plans, business plans, etc.) that will save you time and money when putting in place a new project/program;
2. [The Policy Bank](#) – where you can find a range of template policies and procedures relevant to not-for-profit boards and committees and the organisations they govern; and
3. [The Linkages Bank](#) – providing community groups with web links from around Australia and the across the world to the best knowledge and resources relevant to their needs.

### What you can do to help

We need the help of community groups all over Australia to help build this exciting new resource. Please do what you can to share the learnings around by:

- (1) **Telling us "What Works"**: Help other groups learn from your triumphs and mistakes. If you have carried out a program, project or service that you think others could learn from, tell others about it by filling in a Lessons Bank template. The templates can be downloaded from [www.ourcommunity.com.au/lessonsbank](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/lessonsbank).
- (2) **Sharing your plans & tools**: Community organisations have so much to do with such limited money. One way to make that money go further is by cutting down on wasteful duplication. Send us the plans and tools you have developed and used to help guide your projects, programs and services (marketing plans, business plans, etc.). You can email to [denism@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:denism@ourcommunity.com.au), or post to PO Box 354 North Melbourne, 3051. Find out more at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/plansbank](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/plansbank).
- (3) **Depositing (and withdrawing) from the Policy Bank**: The Policy Bank is already well established as a key resource for community groups throughout Australia. Browse the list of policies already available at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank), or send yours to [kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au).

The motto of the Centre for What Works is that "None of us is as smart as all of us". By contributing your resources and wisdom to this growing resource, you can help make sure that the community sector lives by this maxim too.

**Rhonda Galbally AO**  
 Chief Executive Officer, [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

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## 2. Australian Giving Week – December 4-10

The second annual Australian Giving Week is being held around the country from December 4 to 10 to focus attention on the many ways that individuals, families, businesses and groups can make a difference to the community in the lead-up to Christmas.

It's about helping people take some small, simple steps that open the way for a better supported, more inclusive, more vibrant community – not just during the Christmas period but all year long as well.

Giving Week is an initiative Our Community and is supported by Westpac Bank, which also supports the Australian Giving Centre – where many of your online appeals are housed. (In fact, the Giving Centre has already collected more than \$5 million in online donations for Australian community groups.)

We will be heavily promoting Australian Giving Week, and encouraging businesses and individuals to visit the new Giving Week website at [www.givingweek.com.au](http://www.givingweek.com.au).

**But we need the help of community groups as well.**

- **Spread the word.** Your group can help to spread the word about Australian Giving Week by seeking some publicity. Tell the world what you do, why you're great and why they should support you and the community this Christmas. If you need some help, download the [sample media release](#), adapt it to suit your group and send it out to your local media.
- **List your appeal.** The Australian Giving Centre has more than 850 community group appeals listed - make sure yours is one of them. Throughout Australian Giving Week (and throughout the year) Our Community will be directing donor traffic into the Giving Centre. Some will come to donate to a specific group, others are what we call "trawling donors" - people who come to the Giving Centre with credit card in hand but no clear view of who they want to donate to. They can't find you if you're not there! Find out how your group can sign up at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/receivedonations](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/receivedonations).
- **Tell people about your appeal.** The more people who know about your appeal, the more chance you have of collecting a donation yourself and also spreading the word about the Australian Giving Centre and why people should be giving to the community this Christmas. Put a link to your appeal on all your printed and electronic materials - every single thing that leaves your office - and encourage people to donate. More tips about encouraging online donations are in [this help sheet](#).
- **List a Christmas appeal.** Many groups schedule their major fundraising efforts at this time of year. Along with the general appeals listing, we have created a specific link for Christmas appeals. Find out how you can list your Christmas appeal [here](#).



COMMUNITY GIVING CARDS NOW AVAILABLE!

Australia Post and Our Community have teamed up to develop Australia's first Community Giving Card.

For every Giving Card that is purchased and sent, \$2 will be handed on to a local community group.

You can use the cards yourself, specifying your own group as beneficiary, and encourage your members, business partners and contacts to use them as well.

Find out more at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/givingcards](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/givingcards)

- **Send greetings to your members, volunteers, clients and contacts and help yourself at the same time.** Australia Post and Our Community have teamed up to develop Australia's first Community Giving Card. For every Giving Card that is purchased and sent, \$2 will be handed on to a local community group. You can use them yourself, specifying your own group as beneficiary, and encourage your members and contacts to use them as well. Find out more [here](#).
- **Make a bid.** Secure a great item and support a terrific cause at the same time by bidding on an item listed with the Giving Auction. [Click here](#) to find out more.
- **Spend wisely.** Lead by example by buying your organisation's Christmas cards, Christmas trees and Christmas gifts through community groups. There's a listing of community groups with goods for sale at [www.givingweek.com.au](http://www.givingweek.com.au). You can also get your own cards and trees listed on the site – find out how [here](#).
- **'Tis the season.** For many people, Christmas provides an opportunity to take a breather from work and other stressors and reconnect with their family, friends and community. Find ways to make life easier for your group's employees and volunteers this Christmas.
- **Get others involved.** Tell everyone you know about Australian Giving Week. Email them with a link to this site ([www.givingweek.com.au](http://www.givingweek.com.au)). Circulate the [50 Ways for Individuals to Give](#) and post it on your group's noticeboard. Ask your local businesses to get on board, and your local MPs as well (there's a section for them on [www.givingweek.com.au](http://www.givingweek.com.au) too).

All of this and more is posted on the Australian Giving Week website at [www.givingweek.com.au](http://www.givingweek.com.au).

Have a Happy Giving Week!

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### 3. Local Giving Partnership Program helps communities give at home

Still on the subject of giving, another very exciting development is the Local Giving Partnership Program, which has now been operating for more than 18 months and is proving a hit in local areas that have signed up.

The program has seen the development by a number of leading local government organisations of localised Giving Centres – online giving hubs that provide a focus for a community's local giving options.

Six local Giving Centres have so far been developed and launched in partnership with Our Community, with local residents and businesses in those areas now being urged to support their local community groups by making a donation of money, time, clothes, mobile phones, or blood, and becoming involved with other giving opportunities.

The Giving Centres are tailored to meet the specific needs and aims of the communities they serve.

Inaugural giving partners include the City of Whitehorse, Banyule City Council, City of Greater Dandenong, City of Yarra, Bayside City Council, and Gold Coast City Council. Others will also be announced shortly.

To view these Giving Centres, go to [www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving), or click on one of the links below.



If you would like to discuss the establishment of a Local Council Giving Centre, please contact Kate Caldecott on (03) 9320 6804 or email [katec@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:katec@ourcommunity.com.au).

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## 4. Your chance to shine! Communities in Control 2007 issues call for entertainers

Can your community group sing, dance, act, read poetry, play music, juggle or do anything else that is entertaining? Then we need your help!

Next year's Communities in Control conference (the largest gathering of community groups in Australia) will include a special extended drinks and networking event on the first day – on Monday, 4 June 2007, from 5pm to 7pm – and we'd love community entertainers to be part of it. We are also providing opportunities for community entertainers to strut their stuff during the various breaks throughout the conference on 4 and 5 June.

This is a terrific opportunity for your community group to showcase its talents! Communities in Control is Australia's biggest community conference – it's a collective movement where community comes together to learn from each other, to be inspired by speakers, and most of all to continue to strengthen Australian community groups through education.

We trialled community entertainment during last year's conference, with the Anglicare Victoria Community Choir proving a hit with the crowd.

If you have a skill or a talent you would like to share with 1500 other people who all believe in community and its values, then please let us know. Copy and paste the form below into a Word document or email, and send to Lisa Reed at [lisar@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:lisar@ourcommunity.com.au). Alternatively, print out and fill in the form and post to 51 Stanley St, West Melbourne 3003, or fax to (03) 9326 6859.

Nomination for Community Entertainers – Communities in Control 2007	
Contact Name:	
Phone:	
Address:	
Email:	
Organisation Name:	
Performing Group's Name:	
How many members (in the performing group)?	
Type of entertainment offered?	
What requirements do you need to perform? (e.g. microphones)	
When is your group available to perform? (Tick the appropriate box)	<input type="checkbox"/> Conference break times Monday 4 June 2007 (various times between 9.30am–5pm)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Networking Party Monday 4 June 2007 (5pm-7pm)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Conference break times Tuesday 5 June 2007 (various times between 9.30am–5pm)
More info: Lisa Reed – <a href="mailto:lisar@ourcommunity.com.au">lisar@ourcommunity.com.au</a> (03) 9320 6820	

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## 5. Making space for more diversity

Making space for more diversity can produce real results for a community organisation – providing sustainability in a climate characterised by shortages of skilled labour, volunteers and board members.

That's according to Australia's largest diversity consultant, [Diversity@work](#).

Writing in the latest edition of Our Community's *Board Builder* newsletter, Diversity@work says diverse organisations also benefit from the ability to retain talent, and the higher morale of employees who can "bring the whole person to work", leading to lower turnover and reduced absenteeism.

"Diverse organisations are creative, innovative and flexible – and they match the demographics and values of the community," Diversity@work says.

"Organisations that manage diversity effectively will be at a far smaller risk of claims of discrimination and harassment, which can severely damage reputation and lead to costly litigation."

So how do you achieve real diversity? Diversity@work has studied a range of high-achieving organisations, arriving at the following key lessons:

- **Flexible work arrangements.** Flexibility – part-time roles; staggered or variable working hours; flexible leave options; self-rostering; job-sharing, etc. – is the key to making people feel that their differences are respected and will not hold them back from being "one of the team".
- **Alignment with goals, drivers and values.** Alignment of diversity initiatives with organisational goals, drivers and values is essential for gaining the "buy-in" of all areas of the organisation from the board, to the staff and volunteers on the ground. Make a business case for your diversity initiative and estimate the dollar value associated. Show how your initiative will empower employees to live out your organisational values, and point to any current gaps in your organisation's ability to address these values.
- **Strategy, policy and procedure.** Look into your strategies, policies and procedures regarding equal opportunity, equity and diversity, work/life balance and flexibility, employment of people with a disability and any other relevant policies. If you don't have them, or if they aren't up to scratch, rectifying that will be one of your first steps.
- **Support from the top.** Diversity initiatives are most likely to get off the ground when they are supported from the very top.
- **Training.** Training is a great way to develop and retain your staff, and spread awareness of diversity issues throughout the entire organisation.
- **Relationships.** Diversity is all about relationships between your employees, between different parts of your organisation, and especially between your organisation and the wider community.
- **Long-term goals.** Diversity is a matter of sustainability. Results won't happen instantaneously, nor will all the benefits of well-managed diversity become clear in the short term. Emphasise this point in your planning so as not to set unrealistic expectations. You can usually find a few "quick wins" to bolster support, but don't forget the big-picture goals will take longer. Keep records and evaluate and review regularly so that you can track your long-term progress.

**P.S. The Board Builder conference – the national conference for community boards, committees and councils – has sold out. We simply can't squeeze another person in! The good news is all the wisdom from the conference will be presented in the next edition of the *Board Builder* newsletter. To subscribe, go to [www.ourcommunity.com.au/boardbuilder](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/boardbuilder).**

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## 6. Living in the Moral High Ground – examining your relationship with your core values

Values are easy to talk up, easy to bring out on public occasions, and easy to boast about. As philosopher Alfred Adler said, however, "It's easier to fight for your values than to live up to them."

The not-for-profit sector is quick to claim the moral high ground; but do we always live there, or do we just visit it from time to time?

[Living Values](#), a new paper from Community Links (CL), an organisation that runs community-based projects in East London, pushes us all to toughen up our appraisal of our relationship with our core values.

We'd like to think that the distinguishing feature of our organisations is that they're values-driven. *Living Values* starts there and goes on to ask "Yes, but what values? And what's happening to them now?"

The report settles on the following as the wider values that animate the community sector. They're why we come to work, or why we volunteer.

1. **Empowering people**  
NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US

2. **Pursuing equality**  
From each according to their ability, to each according to their need.
3. **Making voices heard**  
We encourage people to advocate for themselves.
4. **Transforming lives**  
You can see it in their eyes ...
5. **Being responsible**  
We're really accountable, because the people using our services are in our face all day.
6. **Finding fulfilment**  
More than just a job – a moral community.
7. **Doing a good job**  
We're inspired by dreams – but we're judged on delivery.
8. **Generating public wealth**  
Wealth for the many, not profit for the few.

We can all recognise these values as meaningful – but what are we actually doing to support them now they're under threat? As the report points out, governments are tending to direct their support in ways that can undercut these values, emphasising

- top-down approaches (“That may be what the community wants. It's not what we've got money for.”)
- targets and outputs set by the centre (“Empowerment is a nice idea, but how do you measure it?”)
- short-term goals (“A private investor would be prepared to wait five years for results. We never get more than two.”)
- government control of the agenda (“We don't fund advocacy.”)

In practice, this means an increased use of contracts and decreased use of grant funding – and, summing it up, no money that just funds what you want to do in the way you want to do it.

All this is bad, but the real threat, the report says, actually comes from within. Faced with these pressures, what happens? The report has a list of ways in which organisations can gradually undercut their own values:

- Not focusing clearly on your values
- Chasing funding that doesn't fit your values
- Allowing your values to be influenced by others outside the sector
- Letting the demands of running an organisation overshadow your values.

So, how do we make our values live in a world that isn't designed for them? The report has some tips:

- **Talk about values.** Keep your ideals in the front of the thinking of everybody connected to your organisation.
- **Walk the talk.** Take advantage of the freedom you have. Innovate, take risks, try for the breakthrough. Encourage the unexpected.
- **Train to values.** Put your values into your recruitment and induction of board members, paid staff and volunteers. Also your job descriptions, your assessments, and your training budget.
- **Measure your work against your values.** Delivering the values of the organisation involves assessing whether and how this is being achieved. Be prepared to show how your values contribute to the quality of your work, even if it involves talking about things that aren't measured by money.
- **Build your activities on your values.** Look at your processes. How well do they express your values? We need to ask ourselves ‘What do we say we do that we don't really do?’

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## 7. Tell us what you REALLY think! Grants survey & grants management conference launched

Our Community believes that the only way to change the practices of grants managers and community sector funders is to give constructive feedback – so we want you to tell us what your experiences have been.

Our second annual Grants in Australia Survey – posted online at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/grantsurvey](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/grantsurvey) – asks grantseekers to identify what grantmakers are doing well and what they're doing poorly.

The results of the survey, which takes only a couple of minutes to complete, will be fed into our second annual [Best Practice in Grants Management Conference](#), which is being held in Melbourne on February 23, 2006.



The conference, which was sold out when it was first held in 2006, is designed to help government grants managers to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their programs. Key themes for this year's conference include:

- Unveiling the results of the 2007 [Grants in Australia Survey](#)
- The challenges of achieving fair and transparent grants assessment within a political climate
- Achieving Equity in Assessment
- Compliance Made Easy
- Getting Credit & Marketing your Grants for Maximum Effect
- Innovative I.T. Solutions for Grants Programs
- Grants Rage Panel – what grants managers do that drives grantseekers nuts
- Big Organisation – Low Risk; Small Organisation – Big Impact. Who Gets the Grantmaking Buck?
- Avoiding Blood on the Floor when Reducing or Withdrawing Your Grants

**This year's conference also features a special half-day MasterClass for local government grants managers, which is being held from 1.30pm to 4.30pm on Thursday, February 22, 2007.**

Make sure you have your say on grants management practices by completing the survey at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/grantsurvey](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/grantsurvey). You can also read last year's results [here](#).

And if you're a grants manager, make sure you don't miss the Best Practice in Grants Management Conference. You can find out more at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/bestpracticeconference2007](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/bestpracticeconference2007).

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## 8. Cutting through the muddle of not-for-profit regulation

Anyone who's ever had anything to do with the law and regulation of Australian not-for-profit groups has found out very quickly that it's confusing, inadequate, and unsatisfactory.

A new Department for Victorian Communities (DVC) paper on "[Improving Not-For-Profit Law and Regulation](#)" confirms that judgment, in spades.

The costs of the current regulatory framework to both the sector and the regulators are high, and the benefits to both the sector and the community are low, the report concludes.

The report doesn't stop there, however – it goes beyond that to try and map out a way to proceed.

The basic problems with not-for-profit regulation are twofold; Australia is a federal system, which means that it's hard to pin down responsibility, and the not-for-profit sector has no political organisation, and so is an unwanted orphan in the system.

How many times have you heard politicians complain about the burden of red tape and overregulation on small business? How often have you *not* heard them complain about red tape for small not-for-profits?

There are special exemptions from federal company law for small businesses (they don't have to employ auditors, for example), but not for small not-for-profit companies (they do). The squeaky wheel gets the grease, and the not-for-profit sector doesn't do nearly enough squeaking.

There are some 20 different ways to incorporate a not-for-profit organisation in Australia, counting both state forms such as incorporated associations and federal forms such as companies by guarantee. The ways that are cheap and simple operate only in one state (and many kinds of fundraising are possible only because governments seldom bother to enforce their laws in this matter).

Each of the 20 forms of incorporation can have any one of seven tax regimes. The workings of a not-for-profit are split up between departments responsible for AGMs and departments responsible for raffles, and the forms and the financial reports and the definitions used are different for every purpose.

The DVC report calls for simpler and more consistent arrangements and for closer working relationships between regulators and the regulated.

It suggests nine options to bring these desirable reforms about, ranging from High Uniformity (where the Federal Government takes on responsibility for the sector – Option 1) to Moderate Uniformity, through to National Cooperation (where the states exchange information on their plans – Option 9). Under the latter option, states could work together to produce model legislation and standardised rules, and could agree to recognise each other's not-for-profit organisations as qualified to operate in other states.



The report is dubious about the value of a stand-alone regulator for the charity/not-for-profit sector, on the grounds that it is easier to set up such a figure than to persuade the agencies that currently have the responsibility to let go of their staff, which means that the level of confusion can in fact go up rather than down.

However, it recommends that not-for-profit regulators in each state should meet to agree on fundamental whole-of-government principles.

### **UK goes where Australia dares not**

Meanwhile, the UK has now shown that reform in the area of charity law is possible by passing a new Charities Act that

- Defines 'charity', rather than relying (as Australia does) on the words of the preamble to an Act drafted when Shakespeare was alive;
- Requires charities to serve the public benefit, a change that has sent many established charities dashing back to their offices to say why they qualify;
- Makes it easier for small charities to change their objectives and their rules;
- Promotes mergers;
- Provides additional security for board members against personal liability;
- Protects whistleblowers and prosecutes people who destroy incriminating documents;
- Provides for a new system for licensing charitable collections.

Some years ago, in an attempt to straighten up one corner of this mess, the Australia Government set up a working group on the definition of a charity, which produced a [useful report](#).

The government drew up a draft Bill incorporating some of the report's recommendations, but after another round of consultation dropped the whole thing as too complicated.

It is not likely to regain any enthusiasm for further reforms over the next few years unless the chorus of complaint becomes overwhelming (just as a matter of interest, have you written a letter to your local member this week?).

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## **9. Taskforce considers tax-deductibility for volunteer expenses**

Community groups and volunteers have taken part in a survey on the costs associated with volunteering as part of the work of a taskforce convened by Volunteering Australia.

The Costs of Volunteering Taskforce was set up to consider Tasmanian Senator Guy Barnett's proposal that costs incurred by volunteers be made tax-deductible.

It is expected to report to the government this month "on the issues and options relating to volunteers' out of pocket expenses".

Survey participants were questioned about who they think should be responsible for volunteers' out-of-pocket expenses and whether the cost of petrol (or other costs) had impacted on a person's ability to volunteer, or the way an organisation reimbursed a volunteer for out-of-pocket expenses.

The taskforce is chaired by director of the Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies at Queensland University of Technology, Professor Myles McGregor-Lowndes.

Other members are Volunteering Australia CEO Sha Cordingley, chair of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteers Forum, Major General Hori Howard, and national executive chairman of Scouts Australia, Ian Langford-Brown. Mr Langford-Brown was formerly the director of taxation at the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Completing the group are Jobs Australia CEO and National Nonprofit Roundtable chair David Thompson, Freehills partner John Emerson and CPA Australia senior tax counsel Paul Drum.

Senator Barnett released a report in May 2006 including proposals that the Federal Government increase funding for equipment grants, allow tax-deductibility or reimbursement of some expenses, and "remove red tape adversely affecting or impeding volunteering".

The senator's proposals are supported by Member for Kingston Kym Richardson.

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## 10. Reader Feedback

We received a lot of feedback following last month's article by Our Community CEO Rhonda Galbally on the crucial role of advocacy in the development of government policy. Here is a selection of the correspondence we received.

**Ann writes:**

"A little organisation I am working with has played a big role with systemic advocacy over the years but are being pushed by their funding model into individual rather than systemic advocacy which is not the direction they wish to take as clearly it is the system that needs to change.

"The *Good Weekend* on October 14 quotes Irene Khan, Secretary-General of Amnesty International, as saying, '...At the end of the day, of course the individual matters, because the test of systemic change is whether or not it's made a difference to people's lives. But if you only make a difference to an individual, you are just dealing with the symptom.'

"It has been affirming to read these two articles in the same week."

**Vee Spak, Director, NicNac Theatre Inc., airs similar views:**

"As you rightly state in the newsletter, without advocacy on behalf of communities and individuals the government will find itself even more out of touch with the aims and aspirations of the general public than it is at present.

"They will also deprive themselves and us of alternative solutions to complex issues.

"If we called for a national halt on all volunteer and community group activity for even a few days this country would come to a standstill – the scope and value of the work is inestimable. Yet this government continues to promote values of 'individualism' on the American model, over the sense of 'community' that is the Australian hallmark.

"People getting together to contribute their skills and knowledge to promote a cause they feel passionately about, offering criticism of current practices and advocating for changes to political and social policies are essential components of any democratic process."

**Another OC Matters reader says:**

"Considering the fact that Governments (both Federal & State) have over the years devolved down to the 'Community at Large' almost all the care of people disadvantaged in almost any way, it behooves them therefore to listen to the not-for-profits who have taken on these roles when it comes to policy-making and legislation.

"To deny DGR status simply because the recipient organisation has 'spoken against' Government policy where it impacts those whom the organisation is trying to help is a classic case of Government 'biting the hand that feeds it' ...

"Keep up the good work, Our Community - without you, many of us would be sunk!!"

**Ron writes:**

"The incumbent Federal Government has progressively attempted to silence the following: -

- Churches
- Charities
- Trade Unions
- Student Unions

### [FLASHBACK]

#### Speaking up for Policy's Sake

"Much of the negative fuss in recent times about community organisations engaging in advocacy, and the subsequent threats to their tax-deductible (DGR) status, neglects one very important fact. If policy development is going to achieve any semblance of effectiveness, it is critical for national, state and local policy to be guided by those closest to the challenges.

"Community organisations at local, state and national levels are central to the search for policy solutions. They create and develop new approaches; they trial different ways of community building; and they learn what works, what doesn't, and why. Community organisations also deliver services on behalf of government and learn when service design works, when it doesn't and why ...

"Australian not-for-profits need to be free to advocate for change at all levels, to promote projects and approaches that work, and to have an impact on policy. Their tax status should not be dependent on them staying quiet."

**Rhonda Galbally AO  
CEO, Our Community**

- The ABC
- Public servants

“It is regrettable that a country attempting to superimpose democracy on other cultures should be so determined to undermine it in Australia.”

**On another topic, Kate Gilbert, who is founder & president of REALITY CHECK, an organisation for young adults with diabetes, writes:**

“Our organisation has a strong online presence but operates using a very crude website system that we built eight years ago and for a long time we have found it difficult to bridge the gap between the myriad of possibilities online communication presents and finding web designers, for example, who are even vaguely affordable and don't roll their eyes at the first hint of non-profit-ness.

“I have made a small amount of progress recently by contacting a company who I saw had done (another) website however we are still looking at a large investment, and I suspect they don't understand our needs terribly well – the IT sector is notorious for people wanting to make a quick buck so it's a very difficult match with community initiatives.

“I adore the work you do at Our Community and if you ever got to tackle this issue I would be absolutely delighted!”

**Thanks to all our correspondents. If you would like to contribute feedback to Our Community Matters, emails your thoughts to [kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au).**

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## 11. Community Briefs

### **[New community governance qualification now available](#)**

Community group board and committee members and council and community group staff are being invited to book in and be among the first to achieve a new qualification – the Certificate IV in Business (Governance).

This course, which is offered by Our Community together with BSI Learning, provides practical skills, knowledge and resources to ensure improved governance and direction – delivered through a combination of workshops, workbooks and in-practice assessment.

A key attraction of this four-day course is its flexibility – each component of the course is offered several times during the year, with participants able to pick a date that suits them.

Participants who complete all four one-day sessions over the course of 12 months will receive the Certificate IV. They will also be eligible to be admitted as a fellow to the Australian Institute of Community Practice and Governance – Australia's peak professional training organisation for staff and board/committee members of community organisations.

A consecutive four-day on-site program can also be arranged for larger groups or councils.

You can download a program brochure at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/governanceprogram.pdf](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/governanceprogram.pdf), or for more information contact Patrick Moriarty by emailing [patrickm@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:patrickm@ourcommunity.com.au).

### **[More policies online](#)**

Our Community's online PolicyBank – the place where community groups can download dozens of free template policies – continues as one of the most well-used features of our website.

In recent weeks we've added another category – [Communications Policies](#) (includes a [Copyright Policy](#), a [Media Relations Policy](#) and an [Email Retention and Archiving Policy](#)) – plus a policy on [Personal Use of Vehicles and Equipment](#).

More template policies will be added to the PolicyBank as time goes on – please send your suggestions and your own policies for loading to [kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au).

Any contributed policies are stripped of identifying material, standardised and posted in Word format to allow for easy downloading and adaptation.

To browse the full list of available policies, go to [www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank).

## Office space available in Sydney CBD

Nonprofit Australia has up to six workstations available for lease in a great position close to Circular Quay and the Rocks.

The space would be ideal for groups based out of Sydney that need somewhere to work and to hold meetings in when they are in the city.

The ergonomic workstations are open plan and the office has a very bright, spacious feel. A meeting room shared with Nonprofit Australia and equipped with conference phone and board table will also be available. There are shared kitchen facilities. Tenants can also enjoy a subsidised canteen and gym classes provided by St George Bank.

The cost of the lease will be \$5320 per annum per workstation, including cleaning, lighting and power. If you would like more information or would like to have a look at the space, please contact Philippa Bird on (02) 9085 7213.

## Community achievers honoured in Australian of the Year awards

State and Territory finalists for the Australian of the Year Awards 2007 have been announced – and there's much for community to celebrate!

Community achievers nominated for the awards include Stasia Dobrowski (ACT) for her work supporting the homeless, international aid leader Phoebe Williams (NSW), volunteer Mary Ehn (NT), humanitarian Norma McRae (QLD), community stalwart Roy Stubberfield (SA), grandparenting advocate Narelle Patterson (TAS), Special Olympics supporter Aaron Hewitt (WA) and charity busker Joss Tonkin (WA).

Social justice advocates are also well represented among the finalists, with asbestos victims' leader Bernie Banton AM (NSW) and NT Crown Prosecutor Nanette Rogers (NT) also being nominated for a gong.

Young Australian nominees include Muslim leader Iktimal Hage-Ali (NSW), who has been selected as a finalist for her work establishing positive relationships between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities, and Shasheen Jayawerra (NSW), who has been recognised for co-founding a network of youth organisations for sustainable futures across the Pacific.

Medical leaders, animal welfare and women's advocates, philanthropists, Indigenous community support workers, environmentalists and volunteers have also been honoured, along with sporting, artistic and business high achievers.

State and territory award recipients for each category, as well as the Regional and Metropolitan Local Heroes of the Year, will be announced at ceremonies in each capital city throughout November and early December.

For a full list of finalists, visit [www.australianoftheyear.gov.au](http://www.australianoftheyear.gov.au).

## Good news and bad uncovered in new survey of young people

Family conflict, alcohol and other drugs, and body image have emerged as three main issues of concern for young people in Australia, according to Mission Australia's latest national survey.

The survey of 14,700 young people aged between 11 and 24 asked participants to rank 12 issues by level of importance to them.

Body image – which was cited among the top three concerns by both females and males – was a new inclusion in the 2006 survey, which is Mission Australia's fifth.

The survey asked a range of questions, including 'What do young people value?', 'Where do you turn for advice/support?' and 'What people/organisations do you most admire?'

The most popular avenues for advice and support were friend/s (nominated by 86.4% of respondents), parent/s (74.2%), relatives/family friends (64%) and the internet (16.8%).

"Some of the results, such as young Indigenous people placing a higher value on getting a job over their non-Indigenous peers, turn popular stereotypes on their head," said Mission Australia's Anne Hampshire said. "The same with young people valuing family and friends. The media portrays children and teenagers as being highly materialistic, but financial security lags behind family and friends."

Ms Hampshire said another interesting finding was the significant concern among many young people about discrimination. Mission Australia would do more research in this area as a result.

“What is encouraging from the survey is that 85.2% of respondents felt they have adequate information on these issues, and know who to turn to for help. That’s a significant increase on the 76.3% in last year’s survey.”

The full report can be downloaded from the Mission Australia website at [www.missionaustralia.com.au](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au).

### Scam alert site loaded

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has launched a new-look SCAMwatch website at [www.scamwatch.gov.au](http://www.scamwatch.gov.au) – and there’s a spot on the site just for charities.

The new site provides tips and advice on a range of scams, tricks, frauds and swindles that target Australian consumers and small businesses. It also contains stories from people who have fallen victim to a scammer.

Information is collected under several main headings: Lottery & Competition Scams, Chain Letters & Pyramid Scams, Investment Scams, Money Transfer Request (‘Nigerian’ Scams), Banking & Online Account Scams, Internet Scams, Mobile Phone Scams, Health & Medical Scams, Jobs & Employment Scams, and Small Business Scams.

Charity Scams are listed along with Psychic & Clairvoyant Scams, Dating & Romance Scams and Door-to-Door & Home Maintenance Scams under the “More Scams” category.

### Accounting, tax advice for community groups

Recent changes in Australian not-for-profit accounting practice – in particular, the move towards using International Financial Reporting Standards – may mean that some elements in your annual budget will have to be treated slightly differently.

Long service leave, for example, becomes a current liability rather than a deferred liability – a technical change that will mean little to most of us but to accountants is meat and drink.

It seems, too, that not only do you have to put this year’s budget in under the new system, you also have to dig up last years’ budget and change any relevant bits in that, too, before submitting it again.

Because these changes are technical, we refer you to a fuller [study](#) by chartered accountants BDO.

Meanwhile, the Australian Taxation Office has released a new version of its Income Tax Guide for Non-Profit Organisations to take into account changes in tax laws. You can download the new guide at <http://ato.gov.au/distributor.asp?doc=/content/80685.htm>.

### Lamingtons and other community businesses

A recent Federal Court case ([Commissioner of Taxation v Word Investments Ltd \[2006\]](#)) clarifies and perhaps expands the scope of what fundraising methods can be used by a tax-free charity.

In this case a charity that distributed bibles for missionary purposes had set up a subsidiary fundraising company which ran a funeral business.

The business had nothing charitable about it, except that all the profits went to a charity – but the court said that this was enough. If the profits of the business eventually end up in a body that satisfies the (abstruse and complicated) legal requirements for a charity, the business is a charity. As the judge said,

With the decline of the welfare state, charitable organisations are expected to do more with the same resources. Reliance on donations alone will, in many cases, be insufficient. Hence many charitable organisations have established business ventures to generate the income necessary to support their activities. There may appear to be a vast difference between selling lamingtons at a church fête and selling funeral services, but where the object of raising the funds is the same, I can no see no reason to draw a legal distinction between the two.

It’s still the case that this area of the law badly needs to be codified and simplified, but this decision does make life rather easier for fundraisers.

## 12. Community Jobs & Board/Committee vacancies



# Good Moves :: Jobs Bulletin

[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

### JOB VACANCY LISTINGS (Paid Positions)

#### New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Meals on Wheels Coordinator</a>	Parramatta City Council	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Seniors Outreach Project Officer</a>	Parramatta City Council	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Community Services Team Leader</a>	Parramatta City Council	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Employment Officer</a>	Deaf Society of NSW	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Manager</a>	Bellingen Neighbourhood Centre Inc	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Manager, Employment &amp; Community Participation (E&amp;CP)</a>	Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)	<a href="#">Details</a>

#### Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Chief Executive Officer</a>	Gulf Savannah Development	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Finance and Corporate Services Manager</a>	Alzheimers Australia (Qld)	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Executive Officer</a>	Redcliffe Neighbourhood Centre Association	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Team Leader</a>	St John Ambulance (QLD) - Transport Access Project	<a href="#">Details</a>

#### South Australia

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Kangaroo Island community grants facilitator</a>	Mr Matthew Fowler	<a href="#">Details</a>

#### Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Volunteering Coordinator</a>	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Centre Manager</a>	Walker Close Community Centre and Brooklyn Community Hall	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">PDRSS Support Worker</a>	Prahran Mission Uniting Care	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Fundraising Coordinator</a>	CELAS - Spanish Latin American Welfare Centre Inc	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Service Coordinator - Welfare/ Telephone Assessment</a>	Vision Australia	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Service Coordinator/Welfare</a>	Vision Australia	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Fundraiser/business development manager</a>	TRANX(Tranquilliser Recovery and New Existence)Inc	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Wesley Homeshare Co-ordinator</a>	Wesley Mission Melbourne	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Director Marketing &amp; Communications</a>	Plan Australia	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Receptionist / Administrative Assistant</a>	The Mirabel Foundation	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Senior Manager Community Services</a>		<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Executive Officer</a>	Federation of Community Legal Centres	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Community Educator</a>	Road Trauma Support Team Victoria	<a href="#">Details</a>

## BOARD/COMMITTEE VACANCY LISTINGS (Volunteer Positions)

### Australian Capital Territory

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	ACT ME/CFS Society Inc.	<a href="#">Details</a>

### Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	DVConnect	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	The Panic Anxiety Disorder Assoc QLD Inc	<a href="#">Details</a>

### Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Robinson Reserve Neighbourhood House	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Housing Resource & Support Service	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Arts Advisory Steering Committee</a>	Youth Arts Steering Committee	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Footscray YMCA	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Mirboo North Community Care Inc.	<a href="#">Details</a>

Good Moves Newsletter - Your best choice to find and advertise a job/board vacancy

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## 13. Fast Forward

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send it onto your friends and fellow community groups in your area. People can sign up to receive their own copy at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/signup](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/signup).

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

## 14. About Our Community

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise providing:

1. [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) - Australia's most useful website and publishing house, encompassing the nation's largest and most diverse membership base and 12 knowledge and service hubs – accelerating the impact of Australia's 700,000 community organisations
2. [Australia's Giving Centre](#) – Helping individuals and business give in every way
3. [Australian Institute for Community Practice and Governance](#) - practical and accessible certificated training delivered locally through our training Institute
4. [Centre for Best Practice in Grantmaking](#) - the unique suite of grantmaking services for government
5. [Centre for Community-Business Partnerships](#) - cutting edge Corporate Social Responsibility resources for large, medium and small business and community organisations

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