



Edition 1/2003

Welcome to the February edition of *Our Community Matters*, our regular free community update. It is yet another benefit of membership of www.ourcommunity.com.au - the premier destination for Australia's 700,000 community, education and non-profit groups. ourcommunity.com.au provides community groups with the latest funding, scholarship and fundraising news as well as practical advice and the opportunity to list for free online donations and free online volunteers through the [National Community Giving Centre](#).

We also provide discounted services and products, including the [banking services deal](#) with the National Australia Bank which provides transaction accounts specifically tailored for community groups.

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

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

Welcome back to Our Community Matters for 2003.

It is a very exciting year and we are glad to start 2003 by announcing the line-up of our *Communities in Control* conference which will be held in Melbourne on April 7-8. In the first half of this newsletter we will provide some more details of the conference for those interested. Already there have been many expressions of interest from community groups who read about the conference in previous Our Community Matters newsletters.

We have also had strong support from various Government departments around the country and I would like to take this opportunity to especially thank the Victorian Government, through the Department of Health and Community Services, and also the Federal Department of Family and Community Services for their support .

I would also like to pay special tribute to the Pratt Foundation and Sam Lipski for the Foundation's support in assisting to bring out the inaugural Pratt Community Fellows. The two fellows in 2003 are the eminent American experts on community involvement in health and wellbeing, Emeritus Professor Len Syme from the University of Berkeley and Professor Lisa Berkman, Professor of Public Policy and Epidemiology and Chair of the Department of Health and Social Behavior at Harvard School of Public Health.

In keeping with the grassroots theme of the conference and the desire to ensure as many groups as possible can interact with the speakers and also the policymakers, bureaucrats and foundations that deal with them - we have priced the conference at \$150 for the two days. When you have a look at the line-up of the speakers I am sure that you will see that as great value. Again it is the support of the conference sponsors who have ensured the conference remains accessible to all groups.

The main reason for convening the conference (in conjunction with Fr Joe Caddy, the Executive Director of Catholic Social Services) is to focus attention on the great work of community groups and the impact that has on our everyday lives. One of the main themes is to explore the greater impact that is made when those community groups have some form of "control" and ownership over the policies and solutions that affect them. It promises to be a great event and we will work to bring to those who can't attend as much of the resources and literature as possible.

There are a number of other exciting ventures that will benefit community groups over the next couple of months. Those groups receiving **Easy Grants** will have noticed an improved service over the past couple of months and we plan a number of changes to further improve this service - which is absolutely essential for community groups looking for funding to be able to access this information in a timely and hassle-free way. We will also be overhauling the **Raising Funds** newsletter which continues to grow in popularity as groups look out for other methods, tips and ideas to raise money.

Importantly we also plan a number of new initiatives on the www.ourcommunity.com.au site, including significant improvements and enhancements to the **National Community Giving Centre** which will encourage a greater community awareness and recognition of the importance of support for community groups.

It is an exciting year for the community sector but one where many of the the challenges of the past - funding, support, the public liability crisis, the outrageous inequity of DGR status and the right to be heard and involved in decision-making - will continue to confront community groups.

We look forward to continuing to work with community groups to develop resources to assist in overcoming some of these challenges.

RHONDA GALBALLY
Chief Executive Officer

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2. The line-up of community leaders announced for the first Communities in Control conference.

THE importance of empowered community groups having some control over the future of their own suburbs and towns will be one of the issues on the agenda at the *Communities in Control: Giving Voice – and support - to grass roots community and non-profit groups* conference to be held in April.

The conference will be held in Melbourne on April 7-8 and provides a powerful lineup of speakers involved with community who will explore such issues as:

- The impact of strong communities in urban, rural and regional Australia for health and wellbeing
- The importance to a democratic Australia for a strong and effective community voice
- The importance of communities in control in living well from birth to old age
- The role of government programs like Community Building and Stronger Families and Communities

It will also Provide practical tools and build capacity for:

- finding funds for communities in control
- governance, management and community relationships (boards, committees and school councils)
- measurement and evaluation of the impact of community control
- advocating for the rights of community members
- communication, marketing and media for communities in control

Co-convenors of the conference, ourcommunity CEO Dr Rhonda Galbally and Catholic Social Services executive director Fr Joe Caddy, said the Communities in Control conference was about recognising the value of strong community groups and the enormous benefits they have for the communities they operate in across Australia.

"There are some 700,000 community groups across Australia that have an incredible social and financial impact on our lives yet they often don't get either the respect or recognition for the work they do," Dr Galbally said.

"This conference is about not only inspiring community groups but also inspiring governments and decision-makers to look at the valuable work of community groups and how they can work more closely to find solutions that community groups can connect with and "own". It is also about providing groups with the practical tools to make this possible."

Speakers include:

- **The Hon. AMANDA VANSTONE**, Federal Minister for Family and Community Services
- **PROFESSOR FIONA STANLEY, AC**, the 2003 Australian of the Year and CEO, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.
- **SIR GUSTAV NOSSAL AC, CBE**, one of Australia's most eminent community leaders, a former Australian of the Year, and world-renowned authority on immunisation and health.
- **The Hon. BRONWYN PIKE**, Victorian Minister for Health
- **PHILLIP ADAMS, AO**, Broadcaster and Social Commentator

Dr Galbally said the support of the Pratt Foundation had also secured two world leaders on the subject of community groups and the impact of connected communities in improving the health and wellbeing. They are:

- **EMERITUS PROFESSOR LEN SYME**, School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley. Professor Syme will discuss the topic: *"Returning Results: is it better to invest in strengthening communities or persuading individuals to give up smoking?"*

- **PROFESSOR LISA BERKMAN**, Professor of Public Policy and Epidemiology and Chair of the Department of Health and Social Behavior at Harvard School of Public Health. Professor Berkman will speak on: "*The elixir of life: Why strong communities hold the secret to living longer and better.*"

Other speakers or workshop presenters at the conference will be held at the Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre, Bell St, Preston, Victoria on Monday April 7 and Tuesday April 8, 2003 include:

- **Linda Powell**, Assistant Secretary Community Branch, Department of Family and Community Services.
- **Jude Munro**, CEO, Brisbane City Council.
- **Pat Turner**, Deputy CEO, Centrelink; Chair, Lumbu Community Foundation.
- **Kaye Owen**, Director, Office of Rural Communities.
- **Colleen Pearce**, Director, Uniting Care
- **David Melzer**, President, Community Broadcasting Association of Australia.
- **Cath Smith**, Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Council of Social Service.
- **Marian Lau**, Chairperson, Ethnic Communities Council of Australia.
- **Father Peter Norden**, Director, Jesuit Social Services.
- **Keran Howe**, Chair, Disability Advisory Council of Victoria
- **Wendy McLeod**, Head of Regional Services, ABC.
- **Darren Godwell**, CEO Lumbu Indigenous Foundation.
- **Di Clark**, Development Manager, Brotherhood of St Laurence.
- **Julian Burnside QC**, barrister and human rights advocate.
- (See below for full list of workshops/panels)

Conference co-convener, Fr Joe Caddy said the conference offered a great opportunity for community groups.

"There are a lot of people who are members of community groups who normally can't afford to go to conferences but know how important they are in nourishing and stimulating their work. This is a conference where everyone can take part," Fr Caddy said. "One of the chief things I see about it – I just see it as enriching the community sector and providing a bit of inspiration but also instilling a bit of confidence that the community is doing a good job out there – often without reward or recognition."

He said he hoped that those involved in community capacity building across the three levels of Government and the grantmaking community would also see it as a learning experience.

"I would hope this would inform policymakers and people involved in decisions on community capacity building. I think that some of the experience and learnings of the speakers on the program along with the experience and learnings of the people attending will be a terrific cross-pollination of ideas and insights. It will be a huge benefit for Government to meet with and listen to the communities and hear the roles they do play and can play. And also to work closer with the community groups who are the great mediating organisations between the Governments and the people. It's a way of discovering new ways of collaborating for a more inclusive community."

See below for a full program of speakers and workshops or To download the complete brochure and registration form to attend the two-day conference (April 7-8, 2003) please visit <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/Communitiesincontrol.pdf> or email service@ourcommunity.com.au or call (03) 9320 6800 to get a copy of the brochure mailed to you.

We have a limited number of brochures that we can also send out to peak groups to distribute to their networks or an email version of the program that people can send out. Again contact service@ourcommunity.com.au. Or you can call (03) 9320 6801.

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3. The full program for the inaugural Communities in Control conference

Here is the full program for the two days of the Communities in Control - Providing Support - and Funding for community and Grass Roots Groups.

The Communities in Control Program: DAY ONE (Monday, April 7, 2002)

8.30 - 9am: Coffee and Registration

WELCOME AND OPENING:

Sam Lipski, CEO, Pratt Foundation

9 - 11.00am: Returning results: Is it better to invest in strengthening communities or persuading individuals to give up smoking? A Discussion with **Professor Len Syme**, Professor Emeritus, Epidemiology, University of Berkley.

Discussion Leader: **Pat Turner**, Deputy CEO, Centrelink; Chair, Lumbu Foundation.

11.00 - 11.30am: Morning coffee

11.30 - 12.30pm: Protecting our Young: Do stronger communities lead to stronger young people and a stronger society? A discussion with **Professor Fiona Stanley, AC**, CEO, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

Discussion Leader: **Professor Len Syme**, Professor Emeritus, Epidemiology, University of Berkley

12.30 - 1.15pm: Lunch

1.15pm - 2.45 pm: Leadership for the health of communities. Leadership - where and how does it expand community control. A discussion with **Professor Sir Gustav Nossal, AC, CBE, FAA, FRS**; World authority on immunisation and health

Discussion Leader: **Professor Fiona Stanley, AC**, CEO, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

2.45- 3.15 pm: Afternoon Tea

3.15 pm - 4.30pm: Stronger families need stronger communities. Exploring the relationship between Communities in Control and the Strengthening Families and Communities program. A discussion with the **Hon. Amanda Vanstone, Federal Minister for Family and Community Services**.

Discussion Leader: **Lisa Berkman, Professor of Public Policy and Epidemiology**.

5pm Onwards: Drinks and informal discussion

DAY TWO (Tuesday, April 8, 2002)

8.00am - 8.30 am: Morning coffee

8.30 am - 10.00am: Community building - it's good for our towns and suburbs, but is it really good for our health? A discussion with the **Hon Bronwyn Pike, Victorian Minister for Health**

Discussion Leader: **Len Syme** Professor Emeritus, Epidemiology, University of Berkley,

10.00 - 10.30am – Morning coffee

10.30 - 1.00pm: WORKSHOPS - CORE TOOLS AND IDENTIFYING THE TOP ISSUES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES IN CONTROL.

1. Funds and how to find them, including grants for communities in control

Facilitator Dr Wayne Clarke, CEO, Fundraising Institute of Australia

Di Clark, Development Manager, Brotherhood of St Laurence

Kate Caldecott, Director Marketing, Our Community.

2. How to create vital dynamic boards, school councils, and productive board / staff relationships for communities in control

Facilitator Sue Christophers, General Manager, Adult Community Further Education
Norma Marshall, Director, Crown Land Management, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Vic
Pam Russell, Educational Consultant, Process and Change Management.

3. Social Justice and Community Control

Facilitator Cath Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Council of Social Service
Sam Biondo, Community Development Officer, Fitzroy Legal Service
Christa Momot, Executive Officer, Reichstein Foundation.

4. Research, evaluation and measuring the impacts of communities in control

Facilitator Terry Jackson, Senior Research Fellow, Monash University, Centre for Health Program Evaluation
Yoland Wadsworth, Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology
Marilyn Webster, Manager, Social Policy and Research Unit, Good Shepherd.

5. Diverse Communities in Control

Facilitator Hass Dellal OAM, Australian Multicultural Foundation
Kenny Bedford, Wongai Torres Strait Islander Association;
Marian Lau, Chairperson, Ethnic Communities Council of Australia
Margherita Coppelino, Diversity Consultant.

6. Advocating for communities to gain control and communities in control advocating for the rights of community members

Facilitator Julian Burnside, Barrister
Keran Howe, Chair, Disability Advisory Council of Victoria
Darren Godwell, Lumbu Indigenous Community Foundation
Father Peter Norden, Policy Director, Jesuit Social Services.

7. Communities in Control in Practice

Facilitator Kaye Owen, Director, Office of Rural Communities Colleen Pearce, Director Uniting Care
Liz Chapman, Chair, Benalla Community Foundation
Barbara Romeril, Executive Director, Community Childcare Association.

8. Communication, marketing and media for Communities in Control

Facilitator Aileen Berry, Publisher, News Limited
David Meltzer, President, Community Broadcasting Association of Australia
Brian Walsh, Director of Media and Communications, Our Community
Wendy McCleod, Head of Regional Services, ABC Radio.

1.00 pm - 2.00 pm: Lunch

2.00 - 3.15 pm: Democracy and advocacy - How can community groups swim successfully against the flow?
A discussion with **Phillip Adams, AO**, Broadcaster and Social Commentator
Discussion Leader: Linda Powell, Assistant Secretary Community Branch, Dept of Family and
Community Services

3.00 - 3.45pm: Afternoon tea

3.45 - 5.00 pm: The elixir of life - Why strong communities hold the secret to living longer and better? A
discussion with **Lisa Berkman**, Professor of Public Policy and Epidemiology.
Discussion Leader: Jude Munro, CEO, Brisbane City Council.

5pm: Drinks and Departure

To download the complete brochure and registration form to attend the two-day conference (April 7-8)
please visit <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/Communitiesincontrol.pdf> or email
service@ourcommunity.com.au or call (03) 9320 6800 to get a copy of the brochure mailed to you.

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4. Donating to charities and non-profit groups through pay now easier.

Eligible charities and non-profit groups are set to benefit after changes by the Tax Office making it easier for people to donate through their pay.

The Tax Office said the changes to the workplace giving programs would create, a simple and convenient way for people to donate to charities on a long-term basis through pay deductions.

Tax Commissioner Michael Carmody said workplace giving programs mean donations from thousands of employees can be pooled and sent directly to eligible charities and non-profits in one transaction.

"Not only does this mean the charities and non-profits are receiving regular income but they no longer have to issue individual receipts, saving time and money," Mr Carmody said.

"Employees participating in workplace giving programs also benefit as they no longer need receipts and they get a tax benefit every time they donate through their pay, rather than waiting to claim in their annual tax return."

While some estimate the changes to the tax laws could see an extra \$200m given by employees, the problem still remains that the number of groups with DGR status is limited to about 18,000 of the 700,000 community groups operating in Australia - a situation that has failed to keep up with the changes in community organisations, ourcommunity CEO Dr Rhonda Galbally said.

"This will encourage greater giving and greater regular giving which provides a regular stream for groups - and that is a great step forward. But we still have to do something about the inequity of the Deductible Gift status to ensure that all community groups can share the benefits, not just a few. When you can have a number of groups working in the same space doing similar fantastic work that greatly benefits the community and is applauded and supported by Government but where some are at a significant financial disadvantage because they can't get DGR status, it is clearly unfair."

Mr Carmody said workplace giving programs can be implemented by employers using existing payroll systems. At the end of the financial year, employers either note contributions on employee's payment summaries or provide some other form of written evidence to show donations made through their pay.

In launching the changes, the Tax Commissioner announced that the Tax Office would be the largest organisation in Australia so far to implement a workplace giving program with around 20,000 staff able to make regular donations through their payroll.

People who wish to find out more about the new administrative arrangements can visit the Tax Office website at www.ato.gov.au and see [Practice Statement PS 2002/15](#). Mr Carmody reminded people who don't use payroll deductions for donations that they will still need to keep receipts to substantiate their deductions at the end of the tax year.

Charities and non-profits must be classified as 'gift deductible' for a person making a donation to be able to claim a tax deduction. People can check the gift deductible status of their preferred charity on the Australian Business Register (ABR) at www.abr.business.gov.au.

For a fact sheet on workplace giving [click here](#).

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5. Caring for others provides a health boost to the givers.

Volunteering and caring for others may not only be good for the heart, but is also good for the health, according to a recent United States study that showed that supporting others provides more benefits to the giver than it does to the recipient.

A five-year study by a team at America's University of Michigan Institute for Social Research found that

giving to others and providing support for others was linked to longer life.

The Institute, regarded as the world's largest academic and survey research organisation, followed 423 older couples over five years as part of the ISR Changing Lives of Older Couples Study and found that older people who are helpful to others reduced their risk of dying over the time frame by nearly 60 per cent compared to peers who provided neither practical nor emotional support to relatives, neighbours or friends. The study interviewed the couples in 1987 and then followed them for five years to see how they coped with later life changes.

Psychologist Stephanie Brown, who ran the study, said that "making a contribution to the lives of other people may help to extend our own lives."

During the first set of interviews, the husbands and wives were asked a series of questions about whether they provided any practical support to friends, neighbors or relatives, including help with housework, childcare, errands or transportation. They were also asked how much they could count on help from friends or family members if they needed it. Finally, they were asked about giving and receiving emotional support to or from their spouse, including being willing to listen if their spouse needed to talk.

Over the five-year period of the study, 134 people died. In her analysis of the link between giving and receiving help and mortality, Brown controlled for a variety of factors, including age, gender and physical and emotional health. She found that people who reported providing no help to others were more than twice as likely to die as people who did give some help to others. Overall, Brown found that 75 percent of men and 72 percent of women reported providing some help without pay to friends, relatives or neighbors in the year before they were surveyed.

Receiving help from others was not linked to a reduced risk of mortality, however. "If giving, rather than receiving, promotes longevity, then interventions that are designed to help people feel supported may need to be redesigned so the emphasis is on what people can do to help others," said Brown. "In other words, these findings suggest that it isn't what we get from relationships that makes contact with others so beneficial; it's what we give."

The results, she notes, are consistent with the possibility that the benefits of social contact are shaped, in part, by the evolutionary advantages of helping others. "Older adults may still be able to increase their fitness by becoming motivated to stay alive and prolonging the amount of time they can contribute to family members," she noted. "Of course, this possibility relies on the assumption that a motivation for self-preservation can influence mortality. And in fact, there is evidence to suggest that individuals with a 'fighting spirit' survive longer with cancer than individuals who feel helpless or less optimistic about their chances for survival. Now it seems that the same may be true of a 'giving spirit.'"

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6. The latest news on volunteer protection legislation and WA's new community insurance scheme

Insurance (1)

As the public liability crisis still drags on and community groups still struggle to pay the high rates for coverage (and insurance companies such as QBE announce better than expected profits), some of the State and Territory Government have set out to explain the new legislation designed to protect volunteers from being personally sued for liability.

In October, the Victorian Government passed the Wrongs and Other Acts (Public Liability Insurance Reform) Act 2002 as part of their response to the problems in the insurance sector. According to the Government, the "provisions seek to strike a reasonable balance between the need to protect volunteers and the interests of those who suffer injury. This balance is achieved by providing that a volunteer cannot be held personally liable to pay compensation for anything done or not done, in good faith by the volunteer while providing a service within the scope of community work organised by a community organisation. Instead the community organisation will be liable to pay the compensation."

The provisions include definitions for key terms such as "community organisation" "community work" and "volunteer". The definition of community organisation is aimed at ensuring that volunteers who receive the protection of the legislation are undertaking work on behalf of a community organisation that is a body corporate. A volunteer is an individual who provides a service in relation to community work on a voluntary basis. A person is considered to be a volunteer if they receive no remuneration or only some form of limited payment such as out-of-pocket expenses. Community work includes any work that is done or to be done for -

- a religious, educational, charitable or benevolent purpose;
- the purpose of promoting or encouraging literature, science or the arts;
- the purpose of sport, recreation, tourism or amusement;
- the purpose of conserving or protecting the environment;
- the purpose of establishing, carrying on or improving a community, social or cultural centre;
- a political purpose;
- the purpose of promoting the common interests of the community generally or of a particular section of the community;
- any purpose specified in the regulations.

The legislation makes it clear that the protection offered by this legislation will not apply to a volunteer who knew or ought to have known that at the relevant time he or she was acting -

- outside the scope of the community work organised by the community organisation; or
- contrary to instructions given by the community organisation in relation to the providing of the service.

The protection will also not apply -

- where the volunteer's ability to carry out the work properly was significantly impaired by drugs or alcohol; and
- in respect of any claim to recover damages for defamation.

The legislation provisions protecting volunteers will come into operation on 15 March 2003. The full text of the Act can be viewed on the Parliament website at <http://www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au/> and select "Statute Book" - "Acts 2002" (see Wrongs and Other Acts (Public Liability Insurance Reform) Act 2002. Further information regarding the operation of these provisions can be obtained by contacting the Legal Policy Division of the Department of Justice on 9651 0731.

What's happening in other states:

WA: The **Western Australian Government** has also put a terrific resource up on their site to explain exactly how their version of the legislation, The Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Act 2002., which was proclaimed on January 1, 2003. You can visit the Department of Sport and Recreation's website to find how it affects your group or just [click here](#).

For information on what other states are doing with either the volunteer protection or updates on what's happening with public liability check out:

NSW: For information on the NSW Civil Liability Act 2002 [click here](#).

SA: South Australia was the first state to introduce a Volunteer Protection Act which came into effect in early 2002. Details can be found by [clicking here](#).

QUEENSLAND: For more information [click here](#).

TASMANIA:

NORTHERN TERRITORY: For latest on public liability reforms [click here](#).

ACT: For latest news and details on risk advisory service [click here](#).

Insurance (2)

The Community Care Underwriting Agency has now begun operations, offering public liability insurance to non-profit groups in New South Wales, the ACT and Western Australia.

The agency, which is a joint venture consortium formed by Allianz Australia, NRMA Insurance and QBE, is offering insurance for activities including community events, community centres and home care.

The product is designed for organisations that have the following characteristics:

- Provide services to the broader community
- A not for profit organisation that has turnover/funding of no more than \$2 million per annum
- Does not distribute profits to its members
- Comprises mainly of volunteers.

At present it is not intended that the CCUA would encompass larger organisations with the capability to purchase insurance. For more information on the scheme visit the [CCUA website](#).

WA is one state where competition is still evident in the public liability market with the State Government several weeks ago announcing a new public liability scheme - the Community Insurance Fund - to assist community organisations to obtain affordable policies and cover in the wake of the insurance crisis.

Government Enterprises Minister Nick Griffiths said the new fund, underwritten by the State and managed by Insurance Commission of Western Australia, would help eligible not-for-profit community groups that currently do not have access to affordable cover.

He said the fund was created as a result of the extremely important role community groups play in the maintenance of a healthy, robust society and that the WA Government was determined to play its part in protecting community organisations from the vagaries of a fluctuating insurance market.

Examples of community organisations to be considered for cover under the new fund include social service groups, cultural and arts organisations, environmental bodies and sporting clubs and associations. The Minister said he hoped that the establishment of the Community Insurance Fund would help return confidence to the sector, while supporting the continuing efforts of productive and socially important organisations.

The classes of insurance cover to be provided to eligible community organisations through the Community Insurance Fund include public liability; professional liability; medical treatment liability; workers' compensation; property; motor vehicle; and personal accident.

The eligibility of an incorporated not-for-profit community organisation to participate in the Community Insurance Fund would be ultimately determined by Treasurer Eric Ripper.

Community organisations should contact the Insurance Commission of WA on (08) 9264 3333 for further information about how to join the Community Insurance Fund or visit the website at <http://www.icwa.wa.gov.au/cif/cifschemeoverview.htm>.

And while on State Government response, the Tasmanian Government, as part of its response, not only dropped the tax on public liability insurance premiums but set up a hotline for its groups providing both advice and assistance in offsetting the cost of premiums. They recently reported that more than 217 groups had contacted the hotline and that 67 had been financially assisted in paying for premiums. If you are a Tasmanian non-profit group struggling with paying your premium, you should contact the hotline on **1800 003 533**.

And don't forget, many Victorian and Tasmanian groups can access public liability insurance through the Community Groups Insurance scheme at www.communityinsurance.com.au. Queensland and Northern Territory groups can register for the Queensland Government organised pooled insurance scheme by visiting <http://www.treasury.qld.gov.au/groupinsurance/index.htm>

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7. Media tips - getting your message out on the radiowaves.

This month we have some tips on helping community groups get their message out onto the radio airwaves, supplied by former broadcaster and publicist Brett de Hoedt.

Brett worked as a journalist and publicist for New Idea, Truth, Channel Seven and ABC-TV and now runs Hootville Communications, which among other services, offers a five-week media training course called Media Savvy 101, designed with community groups in mind.

Here Brett gives us some of the best practice tips for getting your message across, based on his experience on both sides of the microphone.

"Talk radio is powerful. Every person of influence in the country strives to be on it. Why? They want to sell their messages. Use radio to spread your message and you'll reap the rewards.

There are two ways to get your voice on the airwaves – talkback and interviews. Let's tackle talkback first.

Talkback:

Democratic, instant and often controversial, talkback is the lifeblood of talk radio. If you're involved in a community group, chances are good that you've got something to say. So say it! It's influential with the media, decision-makers and the general public – the three groups you want on side.

Big business and government pay thousands to have monitoring companies scan the talkback sessions looking for the mood of the electorate.

Before you call:

1. Have the numbers ready. Punch them into your telephones - home and mobile.
2. Follow the radio show and listen for the cue to call from the presenter.
3. When on hold make sure your radio is off and listen to the show via your phone.
4. Remember your mission – to convince, to educate, to lobby – to convert the unconverted.

When you're on the air:

5. Quick Sticks. Remember this isn't a normal conversation so the usual rules don't apply. A quick "Hello Derryn" and then get straight on to your point. Don't waffle, dilly or dally. Be concise. You'll probably have 60 seconds maximum.
6. Make it constructive. Don't just make a wise crack or let off steam - that won't change anyone's mind. Tell a compelling first-hand story. Give a killer statistic. Give out information (website, phone number, meeting place) so interested listeners can take action.
7. Don't: Verbally abuse the presenter, politicians or previous talkback callers. Passion is great but anger comes across poorly on air no matter how right you are.

Why didn't you call?

Recently I surveyed a community group of 200 smart, informed and enthusiastic people.

“Who listens to talkback on the radio?” Nearly 200 hands went up. “Who has ever called talkback to argue your case on the issue that brought you here tonight?” I didn’t even get 200 fingers. Even worse, those people that did call, called the radio shows that they knew supported their stance. This is common but not good enough and I told them so.

The passion and IQ of these people was being wasted. Talkback is cheap, easy and doesn’t even take much time. Perfect for community groups.

Remember – the powerbrokers in the community are listening to see what the public are thinking. Influence the content of the airwaves and you influence the perception of the nation.

Telephone Relays

Here’s a way to organise your community group into a force to be reckoned with:

- You’ll need two lists. The first is the member list with the names and telephone numbers of your members who are ready and willing to call. The names should be numbered from 1 onwards.
- The second list is the target list. This lists as many talkback opportunities on the radio as you and your radio savvy friends can think of. Be sure to include the correct phone numbers to ring. Distribute copies of both lists to everyone involved.
- Declare a particular day Talkback Day. On that day member #1 has the task of calling any target on the target list. (Preferably a show that’s early in the day.)
- Immediately after getting to air member #1 calls member #2. Then member #1 tells member #2 which target was called. Member #2 now calls any of the other targets on the target list.
- Immediately after getting to air Member #2 calls Member #3. Then Member #2 tells Member #3 all the targets called so far. Member #3 calls one of the remaining targets.
- Continue till you’re out of targets. Then start again.

How to make a telephone relay really work.

- impress the importance of making one’s call ASAP after getting the go ahead.
- stress the group responsibility of it. #4 can’t call till #1, #2 and #3 have called.
- if you have enough members, divide into two teams and see who can go through the target list first.
- make #1 a can-do caller.

If this sounds silly to you, wake up – every political party in the country does it. So too do most big community-based lobby groups. It can make small groups seem awfully big. You can apply the same principle to calling MPs or government departments.

Interviews

Another way to get some airtime is to be interviewed on the radio. It gives you more time to explain your case and promote your cause. It gives you a credibility with listeners that talkback cannot provide.

So how do you get to be interviewed?

1. **Identify a possible interview topic.** Is your group doing something new? Something unique? Are you in crisis? Do you have expertise or relevant opinion on something that’s making news at the moment – drought, bushfire, Iraq, back-to-school issues? Just existing will not secure you an interview. You have to have a compelling idea.
2. **Prepare your suggestion in writing.** It’s inevitable that you’ll be asked for details so have them ready. Keep it brief and remember that you are selling the idea of an interview, not issuing an invitation.

3. **Select your target.** Select a radio program that you think would be interested in your story. Is there a show that tackles similar issues? Don't call a lighthearted show with serious story. Don't call a nostalgia show with a new-based story.
4. **Make the call.** Call the station and ask for the producer of the target show. The producer is part organiser / researcher / assistant / journalist / gatekeeper. When you get through to the producer it's a bit like talkback - you have a limited time to make your point, to sell your story. Provide a total solution. Here's an example:

"Hello producer. I'm Jane White from the Jones Trust. For the last 40 years the Trust has helped low-income families with the costs of going back to school. Last year we helped 1200 families and we expect demand to rise 20% this year. I thought with kids going back to school at the moment you'd like to talk to our Chair Joe Jones and perhaps one of the families he's helped this year so we can get a first hand account."

This pitch is quick and concise. It explains who you are, what you represent, what you do and who you propose to be interviewed. You also made the pitch timely and newsy.

5. **Have plan B, C and D.** If your first target fails, try, try again. Remember, nobody is doing anyone any favours. You need your story on radio and radio needs your story.

We thank Brett for his great tips and will post these on the Community Management Centre for others to access. If you would like to know more about Brett and his great value 10-hour course, **Media Savvy 101** visit his website at www.hootville.com or call 0414 713 802.

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8. Community welfare agencies stretched to the limit: new report shows.

A substantial rise in the number of people seeking assistance from community welfare agencies and increased operating costs have forced agencies to turn thousands of people away, according to the results of the latest Australians Living on the Edge survey by the Australian Council of Social Services released recently.

"This survey is the fifth ACOSS has conducted with the State and Territory Councils of Social Service - it shows the persistence of community need for services and the challenges for agencies in responding to immediate needs," ACOSS President, Andrew McCallum said.

The survey found there has been a 12% increase in the number of people assisted by community service organisations over the last two years. Services should be congratulated for the effort they have made trying to keep up with demand, Mr McCallum said.

Despite agencies helping 2.4 million people, 180,000 people did not receive the help they sought in 2002 - a 19% jump from the previous year.

"Higher operating and insurance costs, an increase in the number of people seeking assistance and the complexity of client needs help to explain why agencies had to turn people away," he said.

"Many agencies reported they were under increasing pressure and forced to create or extend waiting lists, increase referrals to other agencies and rely on unfunded effort by staff and volunteers to cope, often with limited training and support."

Sha Cordingley, CEO of Volunteering Australia said: "This survey highlights the critical role of volunteers in delivering community services and that the current levels of training provided to support volunteers is generally inadequate. It is important that funding bodies and community service organisations recognise the need to adequately train volunteers and budget to ensure that this can occur."

Linda White, Assistant National Secretary of the Australian Services Union added "Community service workers are working in their own time to meet increasing demand. This is bad for the long-term health of workers and for the quality of service provision. Quality services are built on valuing the skills required to work in community services and providing good working conditions."

The ABS estimates there are at least 9,000 organisations delivering community services across Australia, employing hundreds of thousands of paid staff and volunteers. The survey provides a unique snapshot of how frontline community service agencies are faring including in areas like training and insurance. Seven hundred community agencies participated in the survey across the country.

"This report is required reading for all policy makers. By providing a deeper understanding of the size, shape and experiences of this sector over time, it is an important tool for the development of social policy and strategies to support the important work of the sector," Mr McCallum concluded.

For further information visit the ACOSS website at <http://www.acoss.org.au> or email acoss@acoss.org.au.

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9. Community briefs

Have you applied for the Volunteer Small Equipment Grant yet?

Groups receiving the [**Easy Grants**](#) newsletter were among the first to be alerted to the release of guidelines and criteria for the Volunteers Small Equipment Grants but if you didn't see it in the last newsletter or haven't applied then maybe you should.

The scheme, run by the Federal Department of Family and Community Services is an extension of the program run during the International Year of the Volunteer (and one which Our Community said should be a permanent program). It is one of the best grants in Australia for local community groups and provides an opportunity for virtually all community groups to apply for funding. The applications are for assistance to help organisations purchase equipment in the direct support of volunteers whose work contributes to benefiting families and communities. The equipment should directly assist volunteers by making their volunteering activities easier, safer or more enjoyable.

Some \$3m has been set aside in 2003 to fund the program with maximum grants of up to \$5000. Applications for lesser amounts are welcome and - according to FACS - are much more likely to get funded as they are more likely to satisfy the priority criteria. According to FACS every effort will be made to distribute the Volunteer Small Equipment Grants 2003 funding as evenly as possible across all states and territories, metropolitan, regional and rural/ remote areas. Announcements of funding will be made throughout 2003.

FACS has said they will receive funding applications all year but also say that there is limited funding and that they may close it if the program is over-subscribed. The best advice is to get in early.

This is a great grant specifically for small groups - and particularly for groups where the equipment is likely to support a number of different people in the community. If you haven't had a look, do so now. You can find details by logging onto the www.ourcommunity.com.au site and searching the [**Easy Grants database**](#).

And don't forget.....

Taping for the weekly radio spots on community radio have begun again so if you think your group has something that other groups could benefit from and would like to pass the learning onto other groups, please let us know at brianw@ourcommunity.com.au.

The interviews are played weekly on the Community Broadcasting Association's satellite network which can be downloaded for use by any of the Association's 140-odd stations around the country.

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10. Products and Services

To all those who have received a copy of OC Matters passed on by one of our members and are unsure of our services, here is some basic information. We provide three main newsletters designed to assist community, education and non-profit groups:

The Easy Grants newsletter provides a monthly summary of all grants available in your state/territory - philanthropic, corporate, state, and federal government. Click on <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/newsletter/1/sample.pdf> for a recent sample of an Easy Grants newsletter - only \$45 a year (community group price) which includes year-round access to search our extensive grants database. To subscribe visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/grant_main.jsp

The Raising Funds newsletter provides a monthly resource on the latest fund-raising tools and techniques from running special events to innovative ideas to find money. A sample of the Raising Funds newsletter - which costs just \$45 per year (community group price) for 12 monthly issues can be found by clicking <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/newsletter/4/sample.pdf>. To subscribe visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/fundraising_main.jsp.

The Scholarship Alert newsletter provides a monthly summary of all scholarships, awards and fellowships in your state/territory. Click on <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/newsletter/3/sample.pdf> for a recent sample newsletter. Scholarship Alert costs just \$45 (community group price) for 12 monthly issues plus year-round access to search our extensive scholarships database. To subscribe visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/scholarship_main.jsp.

The Busigrants newsletter is a perfect tool for businesses and social enterprises looking to access the hundreds of millions of dollars in business grants available to emerging and expanding businesses. The monthly Busigrants newsletter contains a summary of Federal and State Government grants funding programs as well as relevant industry awards. Perfect for any enterprise looking for assistance to expand markets or to develop new goods and services. Busigrants costs just \$195 for 12 monthly issues delivered direct to your computer screen. To view a sample of Busigrants lick on <http://www.busigrants.com.au/busigrants/sample.jsp> or to subscribe click on <https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/busigrants/sub.jsp>.

The **Australian Best Practice Grantmaking Quarterly Newsletter** has been developed for grantmakers at all levels - Federal, State and local Government, philanthropic and corporate foundations and providers of scholarships. Highlighting issues and best practice examples across the grantmaking process from selection, administration, evaluations and accountability to marketing and using technology, this innovative and economical resource is essential for every government agency, philanthropic organisation or Private grantmaker. For subscription details and a summary of the first newsletter click on http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/article/view_news.do?articleid=381.

To subscribe to any of these newsletters Click here or e-mail info@ourcommunity.com.au or call us on (03) 9320 6800.

And don't forget our series of low-cost guidebooks, including:

How To: Find Money Fast - 50 Great Ideas to raise up to \$5000. This popular and practical guide gives you 50 ideas to raise money as well as providing handy advice on staging special events and setting up your own fundraising strategy. Great ideas and Great value. For more information on **How To: Find Money Fast - 50 Great Ideas to raise up to \$5000** visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=220

You can also purchase **How to win a Philanthropic Grant**.

For more information visit

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=56

ourcommunity.com.au also offers a free online donations and a free online volunteer service. For details visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving/giving_main.jsp

As mentioned earlier, www.ourcommunity.com.au has formed an alliance with National Australia Bank to introduce the first suite of tailored financial products for community groups. To find out more visit the Community Financial Centre at http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/financial/financial_main.jsp. The Financial Centre contains details of the National's community accounts as well as Help Sheets on reducing fees.

A recent addition to www.ourcommunity.com.au is the National Insurance Centre where we have Help Sheets on reducing risk and the latest news on the insurance issue. You can also register your interest in being part of a pooled insurance scheme to try and reduce the cost of insurance premiums. Visit the Insurance Centre at http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/insurance/insurance_main.jsp.

We have also joined with ACER computers to provide a low-cost, high-quality computer deal for community, education and non-profit groups and their members with personal computers starting from just \$1499. Visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/tech/hardware_packages.do for details.

And don't forget our Management Centre where we have over 100 free Help Sheets on various aspects of running a community group.

11. Fast Forward.

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

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

If you have received a grant or scholarship found on our database or successfully adapted the Raising Funds newsletter, let us know.

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

We also have brochures for any associations who want to mail out to their member groups and let them know about our products and services. Just let us know and we will be happy to supply.

If you would like to reproduce anything in this newsletter in your own group/association newsletters or websites, you are free to do so. Please just add a small credit line, "courtesy of www.ourcommunity.com.au".

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