

This is your free members' newsletter. You should be able to see an orange and blue banner at the top of the first page along with a table of contents listing all the items (with the ability to click through). If you are having any problems with this transmission, please email katec@ourcommunity.com.au



Have you filled out the Community Insurance Survey? We have had a great response from groups on their experiences securing public liability insurance. If you haven't filled in the survey please visit [The Community Insurance Centre](#).

Welcome to the second edition of Our Community Matters for 2002. 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. We also provide discounted services and products, including the great 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 Dr Rhonda Galbally AO

Welcome to the second edition of Our Community Matters for the year.

It has been a big month for our community. We celebrated the first birthday of our organisation and were very grateful for our friend and former Australian of the Year, Sir Gus Nossal, to speak at a gathering of political, business and community leaders. For details of Sir Gus' speech see the item below.

We have also made significant changes to our website which we believe have improved it no end and will make it even easier for members to navigate the site and find information that is of use to them. We have a few changes to come and will continue to upgrade the site - and the features - over the coming months.

Another aspect of change which is explained in this edition is the way your ourcommunity.com.au newsletters will be delivered from next month. The change follows consultation with hundreds of our members over the past three months. We believe the changes will make the newsletters a much more usable resource for our members.

There is also an update on insurance, the latest analysis from the US on post-September 11 donations to community groups and a reminder of the free software available to approved groups through Microsoft.

Kind regards,

Rhonda Galbally, AO
Chief Executive Officer

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2. Sir Gustav Nossal leads birthday wishes for ourcommunity.

We were very honoured to have the 2000 Australian of the Year and renowned scientist and community leader, Sir Gustav Nossal, speaking at a lunch to celebrate the first year of operations for ourcommunity.com.au.

In his speech, delivered to a roomful of business, community and political leaders, Sir Gus praised ourcommunity for helping groups to become more sustainable, allowing them to stand on their own two feet financially and be brave, confident and innovative.

He spoke about the growing need for community groups and how they were like "mini research labs" in the community, constantly testing the boundaries by coming up with new ideas and strategies to tackle social issues.

He said sometimes the methods were viewed as controversial and confronting yet were often adopted as standard practice by Governments within a short period of time.

Businesses were also encouraged to think about their current trend of moving away from straight-out or "no-strings-attached" philanthropy to sponsorship or marketing deals.

"There is a real place for this (sponsorships etc) but there is also a place for giving money because it is the right thing to do," Sir Gus told the gathering.

"I believe companies do have a moral and social responsibility to society and in philanthropy our companies are way behind benchmarks in the US and the UK."

Sir Gus also said the [Ourcommunity.com.au National Giving Centre](#), which provided a free online donation service for community groups, was a unique way for smaller non-profit agencies to benefit from a new way of giving.

Ourcommunity chairman Ms Carol Schwartz described Sir Gus as a great Australian who "has inspired generations of Australians with his passion for life, for learning, for his family and – above all – his passion for making the world a better place for us to live, for now and for the children who follow us."

The full text of Sir Gus' speech can be read on the ourcommunity Media Centre by [clicking here](#).

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3. A new much-improved newsletter delivery system.

After some extensive research and polling quite a number of our members and subscribers, we have decided to improve our method of distributing our email newsletters, **Easy Grants, Raising Funds, Scholarship Alert and OC Matters.**

The decision was prompted after concerns over the size of our documents with Easy Grants, in particular, growing to 60-plus pages in some months because of the comprehensive collection of all relevant grant information. The result was that for many groups it was taking too much time to download. Another problem was the inability to print a single page without printing the whole document.

So from next month we will be sending our newsletters out as PDFs (Portable Document Formats).

The PDF format will have significant benefits for subscribers such as:

- It is far more compact, allowing for quicker and easier downloads.
- It will allow subscribers to select the separate pages they want to print off
- Will enable you to send it onto people within your own office without changes to formatting.
- All the active links to websites to download guidelines and application forms or to access further information will still be there.

For those unsure about using PDF we have prepared some answers to questions below and are only too happy to help with the transition

Will I be able to download the PDF file?

Most people already have this software for reading other documents, given that many government departments and businesses are now distributing information through PDF. All you need to view the PDF document is the **free Adobe Acrobat Reader** software. The latest software can be downloaded for **free** from the Adobe Web site at: <http://www.adobe.com.au/products/acrobat/readstep.html>

It is easily downloaded from this site in a couple of minutes and will then allow you to view our newsletters as well as other PDF files sent to you or posted as attachments on websites.

What happens if I have trouble downloading Acrobat Reader?

We are changing this system to make it easier for our subscribers to use the newsletters. To ensure a smooth transition and to assist with people changing over (where necessary) we have set up a member hotline. Should you have any trouble downloading Acrobat Reader or if you have any problems reading the newsletters in the new format please contact us.

You can contact the **Our Community PDF Help service** at (03) 9320 6805 or by emailing service@ourcommunity.com.au.

What happens if I am currently receiving my newsletter by mail?

Nothing changes. You will continue to receive your newsletter by post. However if you prefer receiving your newsletters by PDF please email service@ourcommunity.com.au and we will change you over. Email is far better - as it is quicker and can also mean you can click straight through to the guidelines, application forms and websites for further information on each grant or scholarship/award.

We believe the PDF files will make our newsletters even easier for subscribers to download, to navigate and to use to find funds for their group. If you have any problems whatsoever please let us know at service@ourcommunity.com.au.

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4. So what's happening with insurance?

The number of groups hit by hikes in their insurance premiums or who have been refused any insurance coverage at all has seen more and more events and festivals fall over in the past month.

There have now been tens of thousands of groups spread over Australia that have been affected by this crisis and more are emerging each week as groups attempt to renew their premiums.

At this stage there has been no concrete solution put in place at any Government level although a number of State Governments are working to try and find a workable scheme. At the time of writing this newsletter we were still yet to hear of a confirmed date for the national summit on public liability insurance for community groups that was flagged by the Federal Government earlier last month.

The Minister in charge of the area, Sen Helen Coonan, said the summit would be held in March. So far there has been no further detail on when it will happen, who will take part and what proposed plans of action the summit will look at.

Meanwhile there has been some action among the State Governments with Queensland Premier Peter Beattie saying that his Government will soon call for expressions of interest from groups interested in setting up a group purchasing arrangements for public liability insurance.

"There are thousands of community organisations in Queensland and while some of these are already grouped together under the auspices of different churches or sporting groups many are also stand-alone organisations," Premier Beattie said."

The pooled arrangement is one of the recommendations of the Public Liability Taskforce which was set up by the Queensland Government to report back on ways to overcome groups being hit by sky-rocketing premiums or a refusal by insurance companies to cover their activities. The taskforce also examined areas of risk management education and possible law reform.

The NSW Government has also moved on the issue with NSW Premier Bob Carr calling a summit for this month and declaring that he hoped to legislate to overcome the problem in the second half of this year.

ourcommunity.com.au is continuing to liaise with a number of Government and local council bodies as well as major insurer Jardine Lloyd Thompson to establish a national pooled scheme that would spread any risk across the country as well as develop extensive risk management education tools. We expect a further announcement on developments in that area will be made within the coming weeks.

As mentioned at the start of this newsletter we are still looking for more of our members to fill in the Community Insurance Survey. A very preliminary look at the data, particularly on the level of claims against community groups, seems to be at odds with industry claims about the increased risk of insuring community groups.

You can fill in the insurance survey by visiting the [Community Insurance Centre](#).

Also after Rhonda Galbally appeared on radio stations around Australia over the past month talking about the survey and also our national approach to public liability insurance, we have been inundated with reporters seeking groups willing to speak about their insurance experiences and what effect the hikes have had on local communities. If you are prepared to tell your story please contact Patrick Moriarty at patrickm@ourcommunity.com.au with your contact details.

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5. Donations bounce back after Sept 11 attacks.

It appears the post September 11 drop in donations to community groups not involved in serving the victims of the terror attacks, has not been as long-lasting as first feared.

Many community groups in the United States experienced immediate drops in the amount of donations as people rushed to donate to the victims of the attacks. The combined totals for the Sept 11 appeals easily topped the \$2 billion mark (more than \$215 million of that online). A similar situation was experienced in Australia with many local groups also experiencing a drop-off in support.

The good news is that a survey by the US **Association of Fundraising Professionals** found that a strong late-year surge resulted in most groups finishing the year having raised more than in 2000, according to an Associated Press report.

The Association polled 25,000 of its members and found that 60 per cent raised more than they did the previous year and that of those that reported a drop in support, most said it was within 10 per cent of the 2000 figure.

The report coincides with a survey of community group officials and consultants by the **Chronicle of Philanthropy** which found that a strong late-year surge had offset the falls experienced in the wake of September 11.

It found that most gains were modest and that few organisations reported significant full-year declines.

One examples was World Neighbours, an international development group in Oklahoma City which suffered a 77 percent drop in donations in the first two weeks after the attacks but ended up receiving more money in the fourth quarter of 2001 than in the same period a year earlier.

Just to give an idea of the response from Americans, a study by the **Centre on Philanthropy** at Indiana University found that Americans donated an average of nearly \$US134 (\$AUS260).

The survey of 1300 adults found that a staggering 74 per cent of respondents responded in some way through either donations, volunteering time, giving blood etc and 65 per cent of households made a financial donation.

It would be interesting to hear how Australian community groups finished the year after many reported they had been hit by a similar slowdown in donations. If your group suffered in the wake of September 11, let us know how you finished up and whether your donations picked up in the last few weeks of the year. You can email Brian Walsh at brianw@ourcommunity.com.au

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6. Free Software for community groups

How many community groups could do with updated software to help run their group. Or actually need software to help start their group or to get it online? And how many of those have actually approached Microsoft Australia for assistance through providing the free software they need?

Well you should.

We have run a link on our technology page that takes groups through to Microsoft's Community Assistance Initiative, a program that has supplied hundreds of groups with tens of thousands of dollars of free software over the past few years. We were reminded of the difference the free software can make to non-profit groups after an email from Greg Dee, Station manager at community TV station, Channel 31.

He wrote: "*Dear Rhonda,*

Please accept our kind thanks for your assistance. At our last meeting you suggested we apply to Microsoft for software for Channel 31. Just this week we received 20 shiny new boxes - 10 sets Windows XP and 10 sets of Office XP at no charge. As we have been struggling to have any form of computer information service working, this has been a real bonus.

On behalf of the Channel 31 community - a big thanks to you and the ourcommunity.com.au team."

According to Microsoft, "the program provides software and technical support to registered non-profit organisations throughout Australia that provide human services for disadvantaged groups or individuals." Those organisations

approved for the software grants include groups working with

- youth-at-risk
- physical disability
- medical research and care
- technology access for seniors
- housing assistance & homelessness
- care for children
- victims of abuse
- disadvantaged minorities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander needs
- language skills training and migrant assistance
- special community and ethnic needs

For more details on the Microsoft click on http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/tech/tech_main.jsp and then click on the red Microsoft button in the top right hand corner of the Tech Community page to go direct to the Microsoft Community Assistance Initiative page for an application form.

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7. Leadership opportunities for community groups.

Leadership Take 1.

A new leadership program aimed at developing "energetic change agents" in the non-profit sector has a limited number of spots for up and coming community leaders.

The NewLeader NewThink (NLNT) is a six-month leadership development program for emerging leaders and includes teams from corporate, government and not-for profit organisations.

Last year the program had teams from Telstra, BP, Ericsson, Kodak, the Australian Tax Office and eight new leaders from Environment Victoria, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Urban Seed (formerly Urban Mission Unit), World Vision, Conservation Volunteers, Earth Watch Institute and the Australian Democrats.

NewLeader NewThink seeks to fast track the development of passionate, focused and innovative leaders who can help their organisations to become more effective. It also promotes closer ties between business and community and opportunities for collaborative action.

The cost not-for-profit organisations is \$350 for the full six months and covers both participants. The inclusion of not-for-profit leaders in the program is made possible by a partnership with the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership and the support of the corporate and government organisations. For more information and contact details [click here](#). Entries close on March 29.

Leadership Take 2.

Few community groups have the budget to be able to send one of their staff members overseas to pick up some knowledge on how community groups in other areas operate.

One way groups can do this is through a scholarship or fellowship. While our Scholarship alert database has numerous awards and fellowships available to groups, one that we have featured on the site as our Hot Scholarship for February – with details available to all members - is the Myer Foundation Community Services International Residency Program.

This program, funded through the Myer Foundation and run through Asialink is designed to provide a limited number of fellowships to people within the community sector who would benefit from working in Asia with a community agency or non-government organisation.

It also encourages groups to form links with similar organisations in Asia. The fellowships provide up to \$12,000 and give people the opportunity to spend two to three months overseas.

Applicants must be currently employed by a non-profit agency and have the support of their organisation and the host agency they want to spend time with. If you have a project or an idea of how you and your group could benefit from a residency overseas you should apply to Asialink. Details on the guidelines and application forms can be accessed by clicking through to [our Scholarship Alert home page](#).

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8. More changes to the site.

As mentioned last week, we have made some changes to the ourcommunity.com.au site. As well as the new **Community Insurance Centre** we have also added a new **Financial Centre** with full details on the new community group transaction accounts offered by the National Australia Bank.

There are also several new free Help Sheets posted with advice on how groups can help to **minimise their banking fees and charges** and also **what groups should be looking for in a transaction account.**

We definitely suggest that if you think you are paying too much in fees, sit down with your local bank manager or financial adviser and discuss the best option for you based on the level of your balance and also the number of transactions that you normally make on the account.

You will also notice significant changes to the search engine for both the Scholarships Alert and Easy Grants database to make it even easier for you to find the grant, scholarship or award most relevant to your group.

Another thing we have added is a new Media Centre where we have posted some of the press releases from the past year and will continue to do so.

The Media Centre also features:

- Downloadable link buttons for people who wish to link the ourcommunity site.
- Fact Sheets on the sector detailing statistics that are relevant to the community sector.
- ourcommunity speeches of note.

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9. Community briefs

A business partnership that works

From time to time we have featured in OC Matters good ideas or examples of community-business partnerships that help to promote greater understanding and changed attitudes.

Well there is one program running out of Brisbane City Council called the CEO Challenge program which is providing positive support for the victims of domestic violence – and spreading the message through the corporate sector of the emotional and financial cost of domestic violence in the workplace.

Apart from the emotional trauma for families, domestic violence costs the community more than \$1.5 billion every year in absenteeism, lost productivity, profits, opportunity costs, and tax share, according to a May 2000 report on the issue presented to the BCC's report to the Womens Advisory Committee by Dr Monika Henderson.

In the initial stages of the CEO Challenge program, six businesses or corporate organisations have entered into partnerships with community groups to help victims of domestic violence and try to reduce the impact in the workplace.

The partnerships are **Watpac Australia and Koolkuna refuge, Clayton Utz and Jebb (Save the Children) refuge, Tamawood Homes and Madonna House, Brisbane City Business Division of Brisbane City Council and Gareema (Save the Children) refuge, Tarong Energy and Kywong refuge and Brisbane Water and Chisholm refuge.**

The companies are providing fundraising support, in-kind services and volunteer work such as landscape design and refurbishment by employees to the refuges. In return they are being provided with expertise on how the company can handle the issue and educate employees.

Helen Wallace, the project officer with the CEO Challenge Program said the project had created enormous pluses from both sides.

"We have had refuges who say it is the most positive thing that has happened to them in recent times and we have

CEOs who say they didn't even know refugees existed and then visit and can't believe how much is achieved with so little," Ms Wallace said.

"One of the businesses Clayton Utz (lawyers) don't have to explain what the project is now. They just say we're doing this for Jebb (refugee partner) and all know exactly who that is and they really respond."

For information on the program contact Helen Gadsen on (07) 3366 0005 or email at gadenconsult@bigpond.com.

And if you have any great or innovative community/business partnerships you want to share, email us at brianw@ourcommunity.com.au.

Harmony Day takes on added significance in 2002.

Australia's largest national multicultural event, Harmony Day 2002, is set to take on added significance this year following the continuing divisive debate over refugees and asylum seekers.

Harmony Day (March 21), which coincides with the United Nations Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, began in 1999 as a day where people could

- think about our community's success as a multicultural society;
- re-commit to continuing tolerance, goodwill and understanding among all groups;
- say *no* to racism.

It is a timely message given the appalling treatment and constant demonising of refugees in the lead-up and wake of the Federal election. It is expected that thousands more people will take part in events marking Harmony Day, particularly to show support for the plight of the refugees in detention centres.

The theme for the day is You + Me = Us and supporters are encouraged to wear something orange to indicate their support for racial tolerance. There are dozens of events to mark Harmony Day. To view the list or to enter an event your group or school is involved in, please visit the website at www.immi.gov.au/harmony.

And on the same subject.

The use of email has been a powerful message in campaigners for racial tolerance being able to motivate and activate a small army of supporters across the whole of Australia.

Melbourne designer Mariana Hardwick and Adelaide-based novelist, Eva Sallis joined forces late last year and managed to mobilise huge support through an extraordinary email tree that was able to raise thousands of dollars to pay for a double-page protest ad in the Australian airing concerns at the treatment of refugees, asylum seekers and detainees.

Since then that huge support developed through the initial pleas for assistance to friends and friends of friends and so on has led to the formation of a new community group, **Australians against Racism**.

Australians against Racism have produced a television ad which will go to air soon. The ads, produced by ad company Automatic for free, will appear on air around Australia thanks to the donations of hundreds of supporters.

The group is also working on a number of other strategies emphasising the message of racial tolerance.

Those wanting to get in contact with Australians against Racism can email Eva Sallis at eva.sallis@adelaide.edu.au or Mariana Hardwick at marianahardwick@bigpond.com.

And just a reminder

Yes, we still need you. While we had a number of groups contact us to take part in our community radio network broadcasts we are still on the search for other groups with great ideas, new initiatives or who just want to tell the rest of the country what a great job their group does.

So if you're up to helping others with good ideas or you want to do in another community group you know or are a part of that does have one, just

email Brian Walsh on brianw@ourcommunity.com.au or fax on (03) 9326 6859 with a brief rundown of what you

are up to.

So far we have had some wonderful stories about how groups managed to snare financial support, stories about how groups created community treasures out of nothing but a good seed of an idea and stories about how groups have managed to expand, survive or just have a good time. The amount of creativity, determination, persistence and smarts shown by groups would put many of our leading companies to shame.

So, no excuses. Send us your good stories now!

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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 here](#) for a recent sample of an Easy Grants newsletter - only \$35 a year which includes year-round access to the database.

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 newsletter can be found by [clicking here](#).

The Scholarship Alert newsletter provides a monthly summary of all scholarships, awards and fellowships in your state/territory. [Click here](#) for a recent sample.

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

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

As mentioned earlier, www.ourcommunity.com.au has formed an alliance with National Australia Bank to introduce the first suite of tailored products for community groups. To find out more go on the alliance go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/financial/financial_main.jsp or call the National's 24-hour hotline on **13 13 12**.

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 \$1299. Visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/tech/hardware_packages.do for details.

And don't forget our low-cost How-To Guides, including **How to win a Philanthropic Grant**. For more information visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketplace/books_list.jsp

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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. Again 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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