

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

April edition 2004

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

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 by Rhonda Galbally AO, CEO of ourcommunity.com.au.

Welcome to the latest edition of Our Community Matters.

It might sound like a broken record but again this month we welcome all the new members, who have joined Our Community in the past month, the vast majority through the wonderful initiative we have run with the Municipal Association of Victoria. I hope you – and all our ongoing members – find this free newsletter valuable in managing your community organisations.

On a Federal level we all know it is an election year and while it is encouraging to see both sides of politics referring to the importance of community, it is important that all groups, community activists and advocates continue to ensure that it is at the forefront of discussion.

To this end we have several items including a survey which is seeking your input on your success at advocating at a political level and also more on the upcoming Communities in Control conference which will turn the spotlight on community concerns for two days in June. Already we have hundreds signed up for the conference which was well ahead of the same time last year so it looks as though the conference may surpass the 1300 who attended last year.

We have worked to increasingly make this newsletter a resource so that groups have some valuable How-To information as well as news and views and in this edition we provide information on how local groups can access the latest statistical data about their local areas, provide a help sheet to assist in dealing with a media crisis and feature a number of reports that will be of interest to community organisations.

Before I go I would also like to pay tribute to two of our Research and Development Council members, Sir Rupert Hamer and Ron Clarke.

Firstly Sir Rupert, the former premier of Victoria, who died last week after a lifetime of community service to literally dozens of groups across a wide spectrum, including our own Research and Development Council, where we benefited from his enthusiastic support, critical analysis, sage advice and determination to improve the lot of communities and community groups. Our sympathies are with Lady April Hamer and the Hamer family.

I would also like to congratulate another Research and Development Council member, Ron Clarke, who was elected as Gold Coast mayor. Ron, another fervent supporter of the need for strong local community groups, established the Centre to Encourage Philanthropy in Australia to encourage businesses to take on a greater role in financing and encouraging community projects. We wish Ron and Helen all the best in the new role.

RHONDA GALBALLY AO
Chief Executive Officer

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2. Survey of the barriers faced by NGOs in having their voices heard.

One of the biggest issues facing community organisations and advocacy groups is trying to get their voice heard in public debates – and trying to ensure someone is listening when they do. But how successful are advocates from non-Government organisations in getting the message through?

That is what a new survey is trying to find out. The Australia Institute, a leading national thinktank, is currently conducting a survey of the role played by Non Government Organisations in Australian public debate and the Institute is seeking to examine the methods used by organisations to get their message out to politicians, the media and/or the public at large.

The research will also explore how organisations describe their success, or failure, in this regard and what they see as the main barriers to having their message heard.

The Institute is interested in hearing from organisations involved in public or political debate that seek to have their message heard at the state or federal level. All such organisations are strongly encouraged to participate in the survey. Any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence. Although organisations will be asked to identify themselves, all identifying information is optional.

So if you are an agency or advocacy group that has been trying to influence the public or influence policy at a State or Federal Government level, please participate in the survey by having a representative of your organisation go to <http://aus-institute.socialchange.net.au/>

It should only take around 10 minutes to complete. Please participate as soon as possible; the survey will close on April 30. Dr Clive Hamilton, the director of the Australia Institute is one of the presenters at the Communities in Control conference.

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3. Registrations roll in for the Communities in Control conference as panels confirmed.

There has been a record response to the program for the 2004 Communities in Control conference with hundreds already registering so far – an extraordinary response. It promises to be bigger than last year's inaugural event when over 1300 people attended and may get to the stage where we need to cap numbers.

Since the last Our Community Matters went out we have also confirmed all the participants in the Hypothetical debate – which is a new addition for this year – and also the 10 Capacity Building Workshops.

For copies of the program or to register you can download from <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/Communitiesincontrol.pdf> .

Hypothetical and Capacity Building workshop panels.

Those taking part in the panel for the **Hypothetical: Sin Money - the Good, the Bad and the Ugly?** which is to be chaired by **Dr Simon Longstaff**, *Executive Director, St James Ethics Centre*, are:

Hypothetical: Sin Money - the Good, the Bad and the Ugly?

Facilitator:

Panel Members:

Dr Mike Daube, Director General, Department of Health, Western Australia

Hugh Evans, 2004 Young Australian of the Year; Founder Oaktree Foundation

Professor Allan Fels AO, Foundation Dean, Australia and New Zealand School of Government

Anne Horrigan-Dixon, Coordinator, Fitzroy Learning Network

The Hon Joan Kirner AM, Former Premier of Victoria

Cath Smith, CEO, Victorian Council of Social Service

And the people taking part in the workshops have also been confirmed.

We believe we have some terrific people on the panels this year and we thank so many community leaders for taking part in the workshops as well as those from the bureaucracy, business and local Government for their support.

It is important for those people who are registering to select their preferred workshops and we will make every endeavour to ensure that people get the workshops they want.

Workshop 1. Evaluation: **How do we know when it works? Indicators and New Approaches to Evaluation**

Yolande Wadsworth, (*Facilitator*), Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology

Jacques Broulet, Borderlands Cooperative Inc, (Free University)

Tony Vinson, Emeritus Professor, University of NSW; Honorary Professor, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney

Workshop 2. Participation: **How to expand and diversify participation, ensuring equity of access and including the entire community**

Fiona Smith (*Facilitator*) Chair, Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission

Margaret Bell AM, President, Chain Reaction Foundation

Kay Mundine, Indigenous Leader, South Sydney Council

Maureen O'Keefe, Grants Coordinator, Australian Migrant Education Service

Workshop 3. Governance: **How to make boards and committees of management dynamic as well as safe, creative, productive and prepared for succession**

Kathy Letch (*Facilitator*), Manager, 3RRR

Dr Gabrielle Berman, Research Officer, Education and Training Parliamentary Committee

Tim Budge, CEO, South Kingsville Health Services

Frank Page, Secretary, Daylesford Neighbourhood House & Learning Centre

Workshop 4. Leadership: **How to encourage and expand leadership. Are leaders made or born? How can leadership potential be identified and nurtured in communities?**

Fr Peter Norden (*Facilitator*), Policy Director, Jesuit Social Services

Kenny Bedford, Chair, Erub Community Council
Danielle Blanden, Principal Consultant, Rogen International (& Genetic Support Network)
Marcus Godinho, Executive Director, Environment Victoria

Workshop 5. Marketing: Best practice in marketing and media. When, what and how to market and use the media

Aileen Berry (Facilitator), Director, News Limited
Brett de Hoedt, Community Sector Media Adviser & Mayor, Hootville Communications
Simon Pristel, Deputy Editor, Sunday Herald Sun
Bob Yeates, President, Country Press Association

Workshop 6. Funding: Finding funds from grants, donations, events, sponsorships and community business partnerships

Peter Kenyon (Facilitator), Director, Bank of Ideas
John Allen, Fundraising and Development Manager, Trust for Nature (Victoria)
Petrina Dorrington, Executive Director, Kids Under Cover

Workshop 7 Technology: Defining the future with Technology. When, why and how to use technology

Chris Denmead (Facilitator), Executive Officer, Geelong Adult Education and Training
Andrew Mahar, Executive Director, Infoxchange Australia
Frank McGuire, Chair, Hume Safe City and Social Justice Taskforce (and Hume Global Learning Centre)
Helen Robinson, Knowledge Manager, Community Information Strategies Australia Inc

Workshop 8. Government: Collaboration with federal, state and local government. How to survive and flourish in partnership with government

Simon Rosenberg (Facilitator), Community Development and Support Cluster, Department of Family and Community Services
Maria Bohan, Executive Director, Carers Victoria
Susan Boucher, Executive Officer, Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council Inc
Debbie Coyle, Manager, Wimmera Volunteers

Workshop 9. Business: Community & Business Partnerships: The flirtation, the courtship and the consummation of partnerships between community groups and business.

Glennys Purcell (Facilitator), Director, Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership Secretariat
Mark Bagshaw, International Marketing Manager, IBM Australia Limited
Erin Bourne, Manager, Community Affairs and Sponsorship, AlcoaWorld Alumina Australia
Janine Kirk, Executive Director, Committee for Melbourne

Workshop 10. Democracy and Advocacy: Campaigning for Issues, Rights and Futures

Andrew McCallum (Facilitator), President, Australian Council of Social Service
Jamie Gardiner, Vice President, Liberty Victoria and Board Member, Equal Opportunity Commission
Jacqui Katona, Advocacy Leader, Jabiluka Uranium Mine
Tom Moore, Campaign Coordinator, Safe Transport Action Group (STAG)
Barbara Romeril, Executive Director, Community Child Care Association

For details on all the speakers visit <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/Communitiesincontrol.pdf>

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4. Getting to know your local area profile – now get the stats that matter!

How would you like to get a better idea of the profile of your local community?

Whether trying to estimate the need for your service or to provide some data for a grants funding application, knowing your local profile against which you might be able to measure, compare and evaluate is very important.

Well now the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which has continued to introduce some wonderful community initiatives in an attempt to find out more about the effects of social policy, has provided a new, free and easy tool to help community decision-makers and policy-makers be informed.

It is the [National Regional Profile](#) which compares some of the important ABS and non-ABS information that helps to compare areas. The information contained in the National Regional Profiles include data on population; births and deaths; unemployment; remoteness; income support customers; taxable income; wage and salary earners; building approvals; and motor vehicle sales.

The best thing is that they can be accessed on a national, statewide or local government basis. And all the information is free.

Andrew Middleton of the ABS Rural and Regional Statistics National Centre said the National Regional Profile (NRP) was produced in response to the widespread demand from communities for an easily accessible range of ABS and non-ABS statistical information in a one-stop-shop format.

"Users of regional statistics can now find at the click of a button the key economic and social ingredients that make up their region, as well as compare their region to others across Australia," he said. "People and organisations, like Regional Development Boards, often need a complete snapshot of their local region and at the moment this is not easy to find. The NRP is a step towards addressing this problem.

"The NRP is an excellent opportunity for a community to take on informed decision-making, research and discussion about their region."

Data for the profiles was sourced from a number of areas including various ABS censuses and surveys, the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, the Australian Taxation Office and the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries. The first release NRP contained data for only one year. In early 2005, the NRP will be expanded to contain a five-year time series for each region. It is also intended that the range of indicators will be extended over time.

The National Regional Profile for different Australian regions can be downloaded by going to www.abs.gov.au and clicking on National Regional Profile or by [clicking here](#). Access to all the profiles is free.

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5. Our Community Leaders – Great Australian Leaders in Focus.

The Honourable Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG, Justice of the High Court of Australia and one of the country's best-known jurists is the subject of our monthly segment, ***Our Community Leaders – Great Australian Leaders in Focus***.

The monthly segment features the thoughts of some of Australia's best-known community leaders on the issues facing those with the responsibility of leading the sector.

Already we have featured renowned singer, activist and the President of the Australian Conservation Foundation, **Peter Garrett**, the tireless former Australian of the Year **Sir Gustav Nossal**, former World Cup Wallaby captain **John Eales** and the 2003 Australian of the Year, **Professor Fiona Stanley**, and the founder of Clean Up Australia, **Ian Kiernan**.

All those interviews can now be read on the [Leadership Centre](#) at www.ourcommunity.com.au. Also on the Leadership Centre, which is a joint initiative with the Department of Family and Community Services, is a free series of Help Sheets and Australia's [largest free database of leadership courses](#) and opportunities.

Justice Kirby has been a High Court judge since 1996, having previously served as President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal, the first Chairperson of the Australian Law Reform Commission and as a Federal Court judge. He has held numerous national and international positions including on the Board of CSIRO, as President of the Court of Appeal of Solomon Islands, as UN Special Representative in Cambodia and as President of the International Commission of Jurists.

We started by asking who he considered to be three great leaders of our time. And Why?

Justice Kirby:

- **Mary Robinson:** Former President of Ireland and, until recently, High Commissioner for Human Rights at the United Nations. A strong, principled woman who has devoted her life to upholding human rights in her own country and then in the world.
- **Nelson Mandela:** For his living example of leadership and forgiveness. Amidst all the tawdry politics of the world, he is a shining example of what politics can be.
- **The Most Reverend Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury:** He brings a message of love and kindness into religion in the modern age of religious intolerance and fundamentalism. He seeks to repair the fault line between religions and knowledge we now have of science and human nature.

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

Justice Kirby:

Leadership is something you cannot be taught. It is something that comes from within a person. Our personalities are so deeply ingrained by the time we get any chance of leadership that it is impossible to pick

out three qualities and think that, by concentrating on them, we can turn ourselves into leaders, when we do not have the magic "it". But if three elements must be singled out from all the others that are important to leadership I would mention:

- Courage
- Empathy for others
- Intelligence and clear sightedness.

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

Justice Kirby:

Australia has so many blessings that it should produce countless leaders. As in every society, there are barriers. They include, in Australia:

- The last relics of xenophobia and racism. Never forget that modern Australia was built on the White Australia policy. It denigrated people on the basis of their ethnicity and skin colour. It is not so long since we abandoned White Australia. But we still have residual elements of indifference to Aboriginal people, hostility to people who are of a different race from the majority and fear of some of the newcomers. Just the same, we have made big progress and, with proper leadership, we will continue to do so.
- Women comprise more than half the population. But they do not share equally in the blessings of Australia. There is still a glass ceiling. This phenomenon should cause no surprise. Modern Australia was established as a patriarch. Not a single woman took part in the debates that led to adoption of the Australian Constitution. Only recently have women begun to take a fuller part in public life. To exclude or reduce the participation of more than half the population involves a tremendous loss to national thinking and the wealth of ideas and experience that women bring. But again, we are making progress and with proper leadership we will make more. It requires setting goals and making sure that we achieve them.
- There are minorities which continue to suffer discrimination in Australia. One of them, with which I am familiar, is the minority defined by sexuality. People do not choose their sexuality. It is wicked and irrational to discriminate against people on that basis. Yet, at this time, some who should be leaders continue to diminish fellow Australians on the footing of their sexuality. Laws continue to discriminate unjustly. Attitudes run even deeper. Education and knowing people who are gay will make things easier in the future. We have made progress and, with enlightened leadership, we will make more. The quest is not "tolerance", a condescending idea. It is acceptance of diversity.

Our Community: What advice would you give to a potential leader to take them to the next stage?

Justice Kirby:

- To maximise the qualities of goodness and to seek out service to everyone, without discrimination.
- To do one's best in one's own occupation.
- To keep the mind open to new ideas. Especially to be alert to the enormous impacts of science and technology on human understanding.
- To keep a proper perspective of petty ambitions for leadership itself.
- To serve others.
- And not to forget to have some fun in life. It is not dress rehearsal.

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

Justice Kirby:

I suspect that there is a genetic combination that makes a small number of people willing to put their heads above the parapet. Especially in Australia, this can be a dangerous thing, as I have found. There is a streak of nastiness in Australian public life. Let's face it; we do not treat our political leaders very kindly, whoever they are. The Tall Poppy Syndrome still reigns, as it has from convict days.

It is impossible to wish to have more intelligence, more energy, more and better concentration, new and brave ideas. But all of us can look at leaders whom we admire, identify the qualities that we think important which they exhibit and seek to emulate them in our lives. Nelson Mandela's example of forgiveness is a great lesson. For the most part, it is not a feature of public life in Australia and never has been.

Our Community: What do you consider to be the three top leadership issues facing the nation?

Justice Kirby:

- True reconciliation on the basis of equality with the indigenous people of our nation.
- The furtherance of the ideal of multicultural Australia, in the richness of its diversity.
- The assurance of equal justice under law for all people in our country - not just those who can afford lawyers or who form the dominant majority in society.

Our Community: What insights have you gained personally on our leadership journey?

Justice Kirby:

It is for others to say whether my journey has been one of leadership. For me, it has simply been my life. I have learned that there are wonderful people and civic organisations throughout Australia keen to play a part in a wider world. Mobilising the decent feelings of fellow Australians and working, in proper ways, for a better and kinder society - one of true equal opportunity - is often frustrating. But striving to see the best in others is a way of encouraging others to maximise their own potential.

There are, of course, a few bad eggs in the world. But most people are good. Most are decent and kind. Most lose their prejudices when the blinkers of ignorance are removed. This is a challenge for leaders everywhere. To interpret the future to the present. Increasingly, nowadays, this means interpreting the vast changes of science and technology to a world that is sometimes resistant, ignorant or indifferent. There is a fault line in our world just now. It does not lie between Western liberal democracy and the rest. It lies between inclusive societies and exclusive ones that put down people on the basis that they are different - because they are women, of a different race, a different religion or a different sexuality. The Human Genome Project laughs at the importance we attach to such trivial differences.

We should all remember the warning of Justice Richard Goldstone of South Africa. He said that one of the saddest features of the contemporary world was the tendency of each group who were the subject of discrimination to try to pass it on to another group down the chain. We should rejoice in human diversity.

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

Justice Kirby:

Martin Luther, Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr.

And contemporary leaders too numerous to mention. People who stood against the tide. People who embraced new ideas and were not afraid. Even when efforts at leadership fail, a leader is not released from the obligation to try to promote ideas known to be good and true.

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6. What are the keys behind innovative towns? A new report tries to unlock the secrets.

Why do some Australian towns prosper while others just a few kilometres down the road seem to stagnate?

New research suggests that the answer probably has less to do with the size of the town, its economic base and geographic attributes than one might think. Rather, innovative towns are differentiated from their less innovative cousins by a range of factors, including younger, more transient and more highly educated populations and access to adequate products and services.

Innovative towns were also more likely to have residents who travelled overseas, upward trends in population and employment levels, a higher proportion of owner-occupied accommodation and a lower proportion of residents working in lower skilled industries.

It is a study that will have some resonance in hundreds of small country towns across Australia where communities are looking for strategies to build community and take a resilient stand in the face of new challenges. The research, which was carried out by researchers from the University of Queensland (UQ) and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries (DPI), also found that innovative towns had better administrative and management systems and decentralised decision-making processes.

They were also more likely to have fresh leadership and a variety of experts and up-to-date professionals available to provide services.

Eight small Queensland towns participated in the research, which was carried out by Ian Plowman (UQ), John Gardner (UQ), Neal M. Ashkanasy (UQ) and Malcolm Letts (DPI). The research report, ***Innovation in Rural Queensland: Why Some Towns Prosper While Others Languish***, says that history has demonstrated that no town has a "right" to survive.

"To survive, a town needs to be flexible and adaptable, to provide amenities and services to its members and to those outsiders which interact with it. Atrophy or decline awaits those towns that are not innovative or adaptable."

The authors say that becoming or remaining an innovative town presents a very big challenge because homogeneity, conservatism and conformity "exert a constant pull".

The report offers a range of recommendations for councils, governments and rural communities wanting to become more innovative.

Among the recommendations for communities were that they should:

- develop a vision and a plan to get there;
- encourage diversity;
- celebrate creativity and achievement;
- rotate leadership positions;
- encourage continuing education;
- and encourage any mechanism that fosters the exchange of ideas, including travel away from the town in order to bring ideas back.

For more information email Ian Plowman at i.plowman@business.uq.edu.au.

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7. Why groups need to spend more time involving young people.

We are in the middle of National Youth Week and as activities go on around the country to celebrate the importance of young people and their involvement in community.

To celebrate the week there are more than 2000 events going on around the country from Sporting activities, dance parties, community projects, conferences and debates, exhibitions and expos, festivals and forums and live performances. See the website <http://www.youthweek.com> for more details.

It is also an opportune time to remind all community groups that serve or involve young people of the benefits of ensuring they have young people represented on their Boards, committees and decision-making bodies.

As well as a good way to ensure your organisation remains relevant to the next generation, young people also bring enormous benefits to an organisation. Those advantages include:

- An injection of energy that can help re-invigorate a group.
- The addition of fresh and creative ideas and a different perspective on most issues - and how to communicate that to a new audience.
- Creating a diversity of experience and skills and the ability to use new technologies to spread your message and work.
- A greater level of flexibility and adaptability to make the most of new technologies and trends.
- A greater level of inclusion to ensure your group is truly representative of various community interest groups at both a formal and informal level.
- A bridge to the next generation of community leaders that helps ensure the future of your group.
- Expertise on issues and challenges facing youth and the things that matter to them.
- Access to new networks and circle of friends, which in turn may mean your organisation will grow and gain increased community support.

For more information on how you can involve youth in your groups, visit the Leadership Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au and search the Help Sheets area. Or [click here](#).

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8. Don't forget to sign up for the Community Business Partnership Brokerage Service.

Over 130 organisations and businesses from around Australia have already registered to find a suitable partner with the free Matching Service, which is part of the Community Business Partnership Brokerage Service at www.ourcommunity.com.au/partnerships.

The national service, an initiative of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, administered through the Australian Government's Department of Family and Community Services, is being run by Our Community in conjunction with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Municipal Association of Victoria.

The matching service allows community organisations to list details of their activities and also list the sort of community business partnerships they are seeking. Businesses are then able to search in their local or interest area for a suitable group to partner with.

The listing is now operational. Community groups and businesses interested in listing for possible partners or searching for a suitable match can now do so by visiting the website at www.ourcommunity.com.au and

clicking on the Matching Service graphic or [clicking here](#). Also you can access dozens of free help sheets at the www.ourcommunity.com.au/partnerships site.

Nominate for 2004 Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships.

Businesses and community groups who have joined together for the community's benefit can now nominate for the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships 2004. **The nomination period will close on 16 April 2004.**

State and Territory winners will be announced in July and National Award winners will be announced by the Prime Minister at a function in Queensland in September. Each National Award winning partnership will win \$10 000 for the community partner.

The Awards are designed to recognise excellence in partnerships between business and the community and to be eligible, a partnership must involve at least one business and one community organisation. There are Awards in the three categories of small, medium and large business and Special Awards for 'Longevity', 'Media' and 'Impact on a Community'.

In 2004 we are encouraging businesses who might normally be hesitant to seek recognition, to nominate themselves - not for the accolades but for the leadership they can show to others. If a partnership works successfully in one community, the chances are it can be used as a role model in another area. For more information visit www.partnerships.gov.au.

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9. Instant Savvy: Critical Incident Response.

We have seen a number of examples over the past 12 months of organisations ranging from major groups to sporting organisations to theatre groups lose public faith after being caught in the media spotlight.

Brett de Hoedt, from media and communications company **Hootville** specialising in media training and publicity for the community sector, has put together this brief help sheet for groups in dealing with a media crisis.

Instant Savvy: Critical Incident Response

Even if your organisation pays no attention to communications, spend some time and energy considering how your organisation will cope with negative media attention. Negative publicity can quickly undo years of good work. Critical Incident Response (CIR) planning is as close to reputation insurance as you can get. Don't think that your past media experience will hold you in good stead. Not-For-Profit in particular can get accustomed to soft, supportive media. CIR media is different – they are not on your side.

Have a specific plan and stick to it. This is no time to improvise.

Two choices should underpin everything else:

- **If the media has made the mistake – correct it.**
- If you have made the mistake – admit it. Don't lie, half apologise, stay silent or grumble.

Don't wait – like nature, the media and other voices will fill any vacuum. People's attention span is short and opinions form quickly. Unless you enter the debate ASAP your detractors will be the only player in the game.

Have a single point of contact for media. Tell all staff and stakeholders to refer media inquiries to this person. Expect the media to make contact with you via every means possible – they can start calling all your telephone extensions to avoid your receptionist. They can start emailing all your staff hoping for any response.

Have a single, trained spokesperson. This may not be the boss. It should be someone across the issues, with real authority who can also communicate to the media effectively.

Address just the key issues with specific, refined messages.

Use press conferences and door-stop interviews as ways to communicate your message. They give you maximum control which is why they are used by cricketers admitting to misdeeds and punch-happy footballers. Press releases look very defensive. Pre-recorded videotaped interviews or statements are plain madness – just ask the former Governor General.

Throw out the bad apple. Too often organisations defend the indefensible. Churches, unions, ethnic associations and corporate boards have done this. The public will respect an organisation that is willing to make the hard decisions.

Have a non-perishable story in your bottom drawer. This is a story (obviously a positive one) that can be told at any time. It can be handy to use during the tough time as a way to deflect attention.

* **Brett de Hoedt runs Hootville Communications and can be contacted through www.hootville.com.**

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10. When destiny is shaped by a postcode.

Certain areas of Victoria and NSW could become “no go zones” unless state and federal governments take steps to address their complex needs, a new Jesuit Social Services report warns.

The Ignatius Centre report, *Community Adversity and Resilience*, found that a small number of postcode areas accounted for a large proportion of disadvantage.

These areas (see below) had far higher levels of unemployment, poor education, imprisonment, confirmed child abuse, mental illness, and residents receiving disability pensions and sickness benefits. The areas were identified following measurement of 14 different disadvantage factors for each of 647 postcode areas in Victoria and 587 postcode areas in NSW.

Report author Emeritus Professor Tony Vinson said that government action need not require large additional spending, but rather a different approach in severely disadvantaged areas.

“Building a sense of belonging to one’s locality and increasing neighbours’ interaction with one another can go a long way to shielding children and families from the full impact of social disadvantage,” he said. “However, such building of connections between the residents of disadvantaged areas needs to be accompanied by the creation of new opportunities in education, training and employment that open up life opportunities.”

Jesuit Social Services policy director Father Peter Norden said that while most Australians were benefiting from Australia’s continued economic growth, some Australian localities and a significant number of Australian families were being left behind.

“When this occurs in a time of economic prosperity, it is cause for concern,” he said.

Father Norden said the report challenged Federal and State authorities to consider bipartisan approaches to ensuring that such serious social disadvantage did not become entrenched. “Poor families from these disadvantaged neighbourhoods will never benefit from the operation of the free market, nor should we cast blame on them for their circumstances,” he said.

“Australian leaders have a responsibility to ensure that all families are given a fair go and if your destiny could be determined by your postcode, it might be time to think a little more cleverly about how the interests of some of these communities could be advanced.”

Father Norden said unless governments addressed disadvantage in the coming year, Australians would continue to observe increased instances of child abuse and neglect, mental health disorders, youth suicide, substance misuse and spiralling prison populations – all at great economic and social cost.

New South Wales 30 Most Disadvantaged Postcode Areas: Brewarrina, Koorawatha, Lighting Ridge, Tingha, Ulmarra, Windale, Bowraville, Claymore, Galong, Kempsey, Warrawong, Wellington, Berkeley, Capertree, Kandos, Kurri Kurri, Mount Druitt, Waterloo, Ashford, Broken Hill, Carrington, Port Kembla, Walgett, Western Plains MSC, Binnaway, Casino, Mayfield, Mid-North Coast MSC, Nambucca Heads, Urunga.

Victoria’s 30 Most Disadvantaged Postcode Areas: Heathcote, Braybrook, Doveton, Korong Vale, Nowa Nowa, Nyah, Cabbage Tree Creek, Corinella, Marong, Nyah West, Torra Torra, West Heidelberg, Broadmeadows, Corio, Dunolly, Hastings, Port Welshpool, Thorpdale, Cann River, Comet Hill, Crossover, Jeparit, Maryborough, Morwell, Heyfield, Korumburra, Lakes Entrance, Longford, Tallangatta Valley, Wonthaggi.

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11. Community Briefs.

Problems with accessing DGR status? Give us your examples.

One of the constant problems raised by community organisations over the past couple of years is the incredible difficulty in attaining Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status.

There have been numerous examples of one organisation getting DGR and a sister group that has a similar constitution, similar organisational set-up, similar activities and similar application being rejected for inclusion on the select list of almost 19,000 groups.

While mooted changes will make it easier for some groups to receive DGR status, the reality is that the vast majority of the 700,000 groups will not be able to do so.

Well now we want to hear your stories. If you have had problems attaining DGR or believe that your group should be able to do so according to the guidelines but have been rejected then please tell us your stories. Or if you have got it after a struggle we also want to hear from you.

Please provide a brief explanation of your situation and a timeline as well as an indication of the resources needed to prepare your application and email to Denis Moriarty at denism@ourcommunity.com.au.

Volunteering Australia seminars on corporate volunteering.

Volunteering Australia is running a series of seminars in April that are designed to promote the subject of corporate volunteering and employee engagement.

The seminars, titled "Corporate Shares - Community Profits" will focus on how not-for-profit organisations can approach and utilise the support of corporates and their employees as volunteers. Volunteering Australia is bringing Amanda Bowman (Project Director for the ENGAGE Project) and Jerry Marston (Community Investment Director for Whitbread plc) out from England to hold these seminars.

The seminars will be held in Melbourne (21st April), Sydney (23rd April) and Brisbane (27th April). For more information, groups can visit the www.volunteeringaustralia.org website or call (03) 9820 4100.

What worries people about how community group fundraising – British report.

A new report out of Britain on attitudes to charities and fundraising has found that the amount of money that actually goes to the group is the single biggest issue worrying the public.

Asked to pick up to five issues from a list that people found "off-putting, worrying or irritating", some 68 per cent were concerned about the amount that goes to charity while 57 per cent said they were concerned about how much money went to the cause itself. Only 5 per cent of respondents to the **nfpsynergy** survey of 984 Britons nominated "nothing" concerned them.

Below this on the list of 'spending' concerns are 'the amount spent on administration' (46%) and 'the amount spent on salaries' (33%). Indeed all the 'spending' concerns that we put on the prompted list had a high level response. Put simply the public has a high level of concern about whether charities spend money well. The other major concern identified by the survey was the method of fundraising.

All age groups, both sexes, givers and non-givers are concerned by 'the amount that goes to the charity' with little variation between groups, and this is also true for 'amount on the cause'. Administration and salaries are a bigger source of concern as people get older (35% of 18-24s were concerned about administration, but 59% of the over 65s were).

Direct mail/junk mail comes very high up the list (61% of respondents), followed by telephone calls at home (43%), and door-to-door collections (28%). Fundraising on the street was only nominated by 12% of respondents which was lower than expected.

nfpsynergy said the research had a number of implications for groups including that:

- people's concerns are far broader than just the method of fundraising.
- Every communication needs to make clear how much money goes to the cause and how much goes on fundraising and management. They need to show how the donor's money is spent.
- Supporters should have more say in the direct mail they receive.

- The sector as a whole needs to explain its fundraising modus operandi to reassure people.

Study backs view that community groups unfairly blamed for insurance premium hikes.

A Curtin University study found that WA sporting groups were forced to pay huge public liability insurance premiums that couldn't be justified on the basis of increased litigation.

The survey of more than 800 sporting groups in Australia and New Zealand, including surf lifesaving clubs, found only 3 per cent had made any public liability claim in the past decade. In WA, the figure was only 1.5 per cent, which equates to fewer than five claims a year from the state's 3500 groups, WA's Sunday Times reported. The survey found about 20 groups had disbanded because of rising premiums.

The findings are in line with the groundbreaking Our Community survey in 2002 which found that 96 per cent of groups had not had a single claim in the previous five years.

Curtin School of Business Law lecturer Colin Huntly told the Sunday Times the growth of claims was the main reason put forward by insurers to justify price rises. But with some premiums rising tenfold in the past two years, Mr Huntly said the onus was on insurance companies to justify the increases.

"I appreciate that there have been global incidents which have affected insurance, such as September 11, SARS, the war on terror, natural disasters – all of these things impact on insurance," he said. "I also appreciate that traditionally the High Court has been pro-plaintiff. But in the past four years it has become more pro-defendant, taking into account the impact of its decisions on the wider community."

Australian Plaintiff Lawyers Association president Brian Nugawela told the paper there was no demonstrable link between high damages and increased premiums. "If anything," he said, "it is the high cost of global reinsurance, the poor investment returns of the stock market and poor internal management of insurance companies that has caused the need to increase premiums."

"The damages in this state haven't doubled or tripled or quadrupled the way premiums have. In fact, they have barely kept up with the cost of living and inflation. "I think it has all been a big con."

But Insurance Council of WA group manager Daryl Cameron rejected claims there was no link between damages and increasing premiums, the Sunday Times reported. He said fewer than 1 per cent of claims were litigated, with most settled out of court.

Charities able to bid for freecall numbers.

Income Tax Exempt charities will have the opportunity to bid for new 1800 numbers before they are released to general businesses, according to the Australian Communications Authority (ACA).

It will mean groups will be able to bid for 1800 numbers where the number matches the word within the name of the charity or is an acronym for the name of a charity. Unfortunately it is only open to ITEC groups – and not the vast majority of Australia's 700,000 community organisations.

Eligible charities can obtain a number through a preferential auction process expected to commence in May 2004. The charity process will be launched prior to the commercial auction in June 2004, to provide charities with an opportunity to acquire particular numbers, before they are made available to commercial organisations. Charities will continue to receive preference after June, where they are the first to nominate a number for auction.

For further information visit

http://www.aca.gov.au/aca_home/issues_for_comment/discussion/archive/mnap_public_consultation.htm or call the ACA on (03) 9963 6910.

Victorian Government seeks ideas on community – from the community.

The Department of Victorian Communities is holding a series of meetings across Victoria to hear ideas on how the local groups and organisations can work together to help build and strengthen local communities.

The meetings will hear first from two case studies of groups who have planned and worked together to make an important difference before a series of roundtable discussion groups with local community representatives and

senior Departmental officials. The Department is keen to hear thoughts on how to make individual communities healthier, safer and a more attractive place to live.

The ***In the Community*** sessions will be held from 9.30am, to 3.15 pm at the following locations. The event is free and lunch will be supplied.

Friday 16 April – Berwick
Friday 30 April Mornington Peninsula
Friday 14 May Geelong
Friday 28 May Ballarat
Friday 11 June Bendigo
Friday 25 June Traralgon

To register your interest please visit www.dvc.vic.gov.au or call 1300 366 356.

Review of incorporation. Good time to ask the question: Are you incorporated?

The Victorian Government has taken the first steps in reviewing the Associations Incorporations Act, launching a discussion paper for community discussion.

The review of the Associations Incorporation Act 1981, led by Dianne Hadden MLC, has identified a number of issues requiring further community comment according to leading State Consumer Affairs Minister John Lenders. The incorporated association discussion paper invites comment on: -

- incorporation restrictions based on the size of an association's revenue, assets, scale of activities;
- maintaining two levels of financial reporting, one for large, prescribed, associations and one for small, non prescribed, associations;
- waiving the requirement for small incorporated associations to lodge an annual financial return in view of the difficulty they have complying;
- levels of income or assets that should be the demarcation line between lodging annual statement and being exempt;
- the disadvantages if annual statements of incorporated associations are not accessible via a search of the register;
- the necessity to appoint a liquidator or prohibit the distribution of assets to members if an incorporated association is winding up is it;
- roles of the public officer; and,
- options for dispute resolution, corporate governance and the availability of information.

Mr Lenders invited stakeholders and associations to comment on the issues identified in the discussion paper. They have until 31 May to make submissions. Submissions should be sent to The Review Panel, Review of Associations Incorporation Act, Consumer Affairs Victoria, PO Box 123A, Melbourne, 3001 or emailed to associations@justice.vic.gov.au. The final report and recommendations will be presented to the Minister for Consumer Affairs in August 2004.

No matter what state or territory you live in, incorporation is an important step for your organisation to take. If you aren't incorporated there are links to how to become incorporated on the Management Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au or you can access it by [clicking here](#).

Don't forget the \$10 Gift Vouchers.

The numbers of new members joining Our Community continues to rise and so do the people taking advantage of the \$10 gift voucher for our range of books.

These publications are designed to provide practical, accessible, easy-to-follow advice to assist in many areas of managing a community organisation such as improving the role of the Board, finding funding and running ethically. The new titles include:

- **Finding the simple secrets of successful community groups** – over 400 tips on running a more effective community group and school.
- **Transforming Community Committees and Boards** - From Hell to Heaven.
- **Surviving and Thriving as a Safe Effective Board Member** - The essential facts you need to know before, during and after joining a community Board.
- **How to Slash your Insurance Claims** - The essential steps to identifying and managing risk.
- **Finding the Best People** - The essential steps to recruiting a great Chief Executive / Coordinator for your community group.
- **Ethical Solutions** - Essential guide to implementing an ethics program in your community group.

- **The Fifty Best Grants** - Winning more money for your community group and school (separate versions for each state/territory).
- **The Fifty Best Scholarships and Awards** - Targeting your personal and workplace training and development opportunities.

To find out more about the book you can click **on www.ourcommunity.com.au/newbooks** or order by clicking on the \$10 gift voucher at **www.ourcommunity.com.au/giftvoucher**.

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12. 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.

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.

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