

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

May edition 2005

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, board, marketing and community business partnership information.

Our Community also operates the [Australian Giving Centre](http://www.australiangivingcentre.com.au), the free online donation service that has so far raised more than \$4 million for Australian community appeals.

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

In this Issue

Contents

1. [Welcome from Rhonda Galbally, CEO of Our Community](#)
2. [Places still available for the Communities in Control conference.](#)
3. [The Funding Centre now features over 60 free help sheets to help your fundraising.](#)
4. [This Volunteer Week let's celebrate our volunteers. Or make plans to do it soon!](#)
5. [Last days of the Community Idol competition. Don't forget to enter your group.](#)
6. [New Risk Management Help Sheets to guide groups dealing with children and young people.](#)
7. [How to overcome the hiccups caused by the short-term committees - BoardBuilder.](#)
8. [Victorian Government announces its social policy.](#)
9. [Nation's Top Community Business Partnerships Recognised.](#)
10. [Now's the time for your group to get ready for Tax Time.](#)
11. [Community Briefs.](#)
12. [Fast Forward](#)

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

Welcome to Our Community Matters.

It is getting close now (June 6-7 plus the pre-conference Governance day on June 5) and the enthusiasm from the hundreds of groups that have signed up so far is fantastic.

We have had a number of calls from people thinking that the conference was sold out. There's still time, so if you're interested in the conference that really looks at the future for Australia's community groups visit www.ourcommunity.com.au and sign up.

Have your say today in the State of the Community Survey 2005.

In the lead-up to the Communities in Control conference, we are asking about the state of play for community groups in Australia. That's why we've designed our first ever State of the Community Survey.

The survey aims to get the low down from you on what's happening in the real world, day in, day out. If you represent a community group of any description, in any location, we need to hear from you.

The online survey takes about five minutes to complete and gives you the chance to have your say on a range of issues including: funding, fundraising, the strength of the community sector in your state, governance, the challenges you face and what your group needs to go from good to great.

The results will provide a snapshot to inform those presenting at the conference and the different issues facing different groups in different parts of the country.

This is a unique opportunity for the community sector to tell it like it is. We'll announce the results at the Communities In Control Conference and in an upcoming Community Matters newsletter.

You can complete the survey right now by visiting www.ourcommunity.com.au/communitysurvey2005.

New initiative to help you get a start in boosting your fundraising.

Going around the country and running seminars and workshops for community groups, the two areas that constantly come up as the major issues facing groups are around governance and fundraising.

In fact if there is one thing that groups find more frustrating than anything else it is the issue of fundraising and bringing in more money into the group. The most common lament is that people get involved in a community group with the best intentions and often spend most of their time trying to raise the money to implement the ideas they originally had.

While we have recently boosted the Our Community site with over 100 free help Sheets, a Board matching service and a growing number of policy templates for groups on the Boards, Committees & Governance Centre (www.ourcommunity.com.au/boards) this month I am proud to announce a similar initiative on the Funding Centre.

While we plan a number of new funding and fundraising resources and tools we have started by adding about 60 free help sheets covering areas such as accessing grants, donations, special events, membership and much more.

There are more details below but if you haven't visited the Funding Centre recently and haven't seen some of the new Help Sheets then visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding.

Deakin Lecture.

This week I have been re-united with Professor Len Syme, the world-renowned social epidemiologist who was a big hit at the first Communities in Control conference in 2003 for a series of Deakin Lectures on innovation in the area of social values.

Len, myself and Myra Pincott, the national president of the Country Women's Association of Australia have been speaking on the topic of **A Fair Go: social capital, rural resilience and its impact on community**.

It has been a great opportunity to reflect on the needs of Australian communities and the central and powerful role that community groups have in making a community strong and resilient.

It is not just regional areas but right across Australia. We still don't pay enough respect or enough regard to the tens of thousands of groups who just through their existence and through the work they do, make such an enormous difference to the lives of so many.

It is one of the reasons we ran the Community Idol contest this year – to try and elevate community groups to centre stage. If you haven't entered your group in Community Idol, entries close on **Monday, May 16**. See www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol for more information.

And for those interested in my Deakin lecture titled the Hungry Australians you can download it at <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/Hungry%20Australians%20Deakin.pdf>.

And lastly this week is National Volunteer Week. It's not a bad time to start thinking about ways we can all support the volunteers and the groups who we dearly need and love.

Have a great month and hope to see many of you at the conference.

RHONDA GALBALLY AO
Chief Executive Officer

[Back to Top](#)

2. Still time to book your place for the Communities in Control conference.

There are still spots available for those community groups or people working in the community sector who want to come to the 2005 Communities in Control conference.

The conference, titled *Imagine: A healthy Future. Imagine: Where Communities are in control*, will again be held at the Moonee Valley Racecourse in Melbourne on **June 6-7, 2005** with a special Boards and committees capacity-building day on **Sunday, June 5, 2005**.

Conference speakers include 2005 Pratt International Fellow and City of Vancouver CEO, Ms Judy Rogers, who was awarded a United Nations award for innovation for her community-building efforts and her efforts in tackling public health issues by bringing community groups and Government agencies together to form Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams (NIST).

High Court judge, Justice Michael Kirby, Geraldine Doogue and Michelle Grattan, Dick Estens, Barry Jones, Rick Farley, ABS boss Dennis Trewin, Robert Manne and Clover Moore, Victorian Minister for Communities John Thwaites, innovative thinker Evan Thornley, Dr Betsy Blunden, Michael Hogan, the Deputy Director-General of Queensland's Department of Communities among others.

So if your group is a community organisation that needs some inspiration, some direction and also wants to hear how communities can take control and work to build a healthy future, then you can book now.

To join hundreds of other community groups, policymakers, grants program managers and local government officials in discussing the future of community and community groups, call Steve Moriarty on (03) 9320 6811 or download a program and order form at www.ourcommunity.com.au/CIC.

And don't forget the Boards Day on Sunday, June 6, 2005.

Community groups who have issues with their governance can also sign up for the special pre-conference *Refresh, Recharge, Revive – Capacity Building For Boards & Committees (and their members)* day.

Topics include:

- **Creating Dynamic Boards** by organisational expert Professor Susan Long
- **And then there were none** by Dr Jim Cavaye, leading Australian community development educator.
- **Better Boards, Better Communities, a better life for all** by community sector expert, Professor Myles McGregor-Lowndes, Director, Centre of Philanthropy and Non-profit Studies at Queensland University of Technology
- **Getting caught in the Media Trap: Why good governance and honesty is always the best policy** by Stephen Mayne, good governance activist and founder of the crikey.com.au.
- **A panel on The Diversity Challenge: Do it or Die** led by Ian Mannix, General Manager of 774 ABC Melbourne.

The Boards Day also features a choice of workshops led by a series of great panellists discussing issues such as:

- Fiduciary duties – keeping your Board safe
- Success and Renewal
- Better Boards – Assessing and Improving your Boards
- Overcoming Board Dysfunction
- Getting and Managing Money

For more details on signing up just for the Boards Day or for the two-day Communities in Control conference call Steve Moriarty (03) 9320 6811, download a program and order form at www.ourcommunity.com.au/CIC or email stevem@ourcommunity.com.au.

Take part in survey on challenges facing groups.

And don't forget to have you say in the State of the Community Survey 2005 to tell us what you think about a range of issues affecting community groups.

To fill in the survey, visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/communitysurvey2005.

[Back to Top](#)

3. New Helpsheets now Available at Our Community's Funding Centre.

Members of Our Community, subscribers to our newsletters and visitors to [our website](#) know that Our Community is the premier destination for community groups seeking ideas and assistance in fundraising and accessing grants funding.

With that in mind, Our Community has just launched a new series of **free help sheets** at its **Community Funding Centre** at www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding to help groups learn to raise more money, and raise it more effectively.

More than 60 new free help sheets are now online offering advice across a variety of fundraising categories. These help sheets set out to provide community groups with access to short, direct – and most importantly, free – tips and information on how to raise money using a variety of methods.

The help sheets on www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding fall under a number of categories, including:

- [Grants](#) – which can help your group look more widely for grants, or produce better grant submissions.
- [Donations](#) – aimed at attracting and retaining donors, as well as providing information on online donations and DGR legislation.
- [Appeals](#) – to help your group stage successful appeals and ensure attract people to give to your appeals
- [Special Events](#) – designed to help your group prepare for and run a successful special event.
- [Membership Schemes](#) – to help you gain recurring funds from membership.
- [Community Business Partnerships](#) – aimed at helping you raise funds by working in partnership with business
- [Sponsorship](#) – which can help you find, attract and keep sponsors.
- [Workplace Giving](#) – looking at how your group can receive funds through workplace giving.
- [Wills and Bequests](#) – which can help your group with its approaches for funds through wills and bequests.
- [Fetes and Festivals](#) – aimed at helping your group run a successful fete or festival.

Further improvements and additions are planned for the [Funding Centre](#) in the near future – including more free help sheets, further online resources and even more links to essential funding and fundraising information.

Of course, these help sheets work best when used in conjunction with all the latest information and advice contained in Our Community's [Easy Grants](#) and [Raising Funds](#) newsletters. For the updated May version of the latest Our Community Resources Guide visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/resourceguide

[Back to Top](#)

4. This Volunteer Week let's celebrate our volunteers. Or make plan to do it soon!

It's Volunteer Week and while there are a number of activities happening all around Australia from awards ceremonies to free rolls at McDonalds for volunteers, it's also a good week to consider what else you do to support your volunteer force.

Sometimes in community groups we get so caught up in trying to look after donors, members, sponsors, clients, funding agencies, Governments and so many other stakeholders that we don't take the time we should to thank our volunteers.

It's a mistake we make at our own peril because the running of the country would grind to a halt tomorrow if not for the army of volunteers who collectively put in more than 704 million hours of work every year – a contribution that would cost billions of dollars if Governments (and taxpayers) had to pay.

Think of almost any area of the running of our community – schools, hospitals, churches, sporting groups, environmental groups, peak associations, self-help groups, progress associations, and festival committees – and you will find Australia's unsung army of community volunteers working away.

The worst thing we can do is take volunteers for granted and think that if they are happy doing the job, they will always be happy and keep on doing it. Community groups need to be constantly looking at ways they can improve the way they treat, train and thank volunteers.

Here are some ideas to ensure your group's volunteers remain healthy, happy and a walking advertisement for the good work your group performs.

- Ensure your committee is committed to volunteers helping out with your group. It's not just a case of saying "Yes"; it's a commitment to providing all the tools and resources they need to do the job properly.
- Realise that your organisation understands that although volunteers don't get paid, they still incur costs (insurance, training, reimbursement of expenses, transport etc).
- Develop a volunteer handbook outlining the rights, roles and responsibilities of volunteers so that everyone is aware of the relationship from the outset.
- Ensure volunteers understand those guidelines, roles and responsibilities and agree to abide by them before signing on. Also ensure they know who in the organisation they can speak to if they have any issues or questions.
- Establish a volunteer induction process so that volunteers can learn more about your organisation and so you can evaluate their training needs. If required, undertake the appropriate screening (for some volunteer positions it is mandatory).
- Create a volunteer information pack with necessary forms, brochures, training details and information about your group.
- Have a job description for each volunteer position that describes the role, explains the program's desired outcomes and their role in achieving them.

Visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=1775 and download the complete *Valuing our Volunteers* Help sheet for a full range of measures on thanking volunteers.

[Back to Top](#)

5. Last days to enter Community idol competition.

Community groups wanting to enter the Australian Community Idol competition have until Monday, May 16, 2005 to get their entries in to win \$3000 in prize money and capture the title of 2005 Community Group Idol.

Once the entries close, a judging panel of community leaders will decide on the three finalists. Representatives of the three finalist groups will then be invited to the Communities in Control Conference on June 6 where they will be interviewed on stage by ABC Television and Radio presenter James O'Loughlin. Delegates at the conference will then vote on the eventual winner.

So if you think your group provides an excellent example of how non-profit groups should operate then hurry and enter the contest for the 2005 Community Idol.

As well as being incorporated and having been in existence for more than two years, each group will need to explain how it:

- Promotes accessibility and equal participation in your community
- Has built a dynamic Board or committee of management
- Has pursued excellence in fundraising

- Has worked with local business to develop genuine community business partnerships
- Has shown leadership and advocacy
- Has a track record of community work that makes it stand out from the pack

The group named as the 2005 Australian Community Group Idol will receive prize money of \$3000 as well as a full set of Our Community books valued at over \$360 and a year's subscription to our series of monthly and quarterly newsletters. The two other finalists will also receive the package of books and newsletters.

Entries close on May 16, 2005. The three finalists will be advised by phone before the end of May.

To apply online or to download a hardcopy application form, please visit the site at www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol.

[Back to Top](#)

6. Now's the time for your group to get ready for Tax Time.

For those community groups thinking about running an end-of-financial year Tax Appeal now's the time to visit the new Marketing, Media & Post Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapostcentre where there is over 100 free Help sheets and resources to help with preparing direct mail, marketing and media campaigns. The site has been developed with the support of Australia Post.

We would be interested to hear your thoughts on the Marketing Media and Post site and how your group has been have used the resources on the site so let us know at brianw@ourcommunity.com.au.

Getting ready for Tax Time.

Over the next few weeks in the lead-up to Tax time, people across the nation will be scurrying around, delving into files and shoeboxes and trying to track down receipts and documentation to get their tax returns in order.

Tax time and the lead-up to the end of financial year is also a time of high activity for thousands of community groups and charities across the nation. It is the time when many groups run their annual fundraising appeals, collecting donations that keep them going through the rest of the year.

Over the next six or so weeks, mailboxes will fill with appeal letters from a multitude of groups and – as a result – tens of millions of dollars will be donated. Many groups think it is a crowded market and don't seek support at this time, but the fact is that if people are considering making donations, they should have your group in mind.

And it is not just charities that provide a tax deduction who win support at this time of year which is why your own community group should be considering whether it's a good time to let people know you need assistance.

Here are some ideas to help your group get ready for a Tax Time appeal.

- Decide whether your group has the time, resources and the need to put together an end-of-financial-year appeal.
- Identify who you will target. Will it just go to members, donors and supporters or will you try and increase the circle of support?
- Ensure your database containing all the names and addresses is up-to-date and in the right format to be used so you can personalise the letters.
- Consider carefully your message asking for support. Don't say you need money but explain what the donations will help you achieve and why it is important work.
- Whether your group is a theatre group, a health organisation, the local CWA or a sports group, provide real examples to demonstrate the difference you make in the community.
- In your letter outline the different options of how people can donate money (in person, by mail, phone or fax and through an online donation facility such as the Australian Giving Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au).
- Take the opportunity to ask people if they would like to receive more information on your group does and what it does.
- Ensure that your systems are ready to cope with appeal (i.e. someone is manning the phone or office, the online appeal site is working and the leadership know the appeal is on).
- For more information visit the Marketing, Media & Post Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapostcentre.

[Back to Top](#)

7. How to overcome the hiccups caused by the short-term committees - BoardBuilder.

Every year all over Australia, countless committees crank up as a new kindergarten, pre-school or school year gets under way. Those who have served on the committee the year before have mostly gone – moving along with their children – and the new committee begins work wondering where on earth they should start.

And then there's Melbourne's Open Houses Committee – a group that should be seen as a shining beacon for all those highly transient committees suffering from a constant, destructive turnover of members.

This is a committee that has overcome the dreaded knowledge drain by putting in place a few simple measures. Best of all, they are measures that are easy for any committee to implement.

As Open Houses Coordinator Caroline Harvey tells Edition 2 of the *Board Builder*, it's all about having a succession plan – with clear goals, clear roles and a good manual.

The proof of the effectiveness of the committee's transition process is in the success of the Open Houses event itself. This year the fundraiser made \$32,000, which Hawthorn's St Joseph's Primary School has used to buy new trestle tables and a range of new play and safety equipment.

Caroline's top tips for transient committees wanting to avoid the dreaded knowledge exodus include:

- Try to ensure people, particularly the coordinator or chair, sign up for more than one year at a time so that the entire committee does not turn over at once.
- Organise the transition early (before the New Year starts if possible) and hold a handover meeting involving both the outgoing members and the new members.
- Ask outgoing committee members if they will consent to being contacted by new members if they have any queries about their role.
- Develop a comprehensive manual that makes it very clear what everyone's roles are and what needs to be done by when.
- Give every committee member a set role (e.g. treasurer, marketing coordinator, publicity coordinator, website coordinator) with a comprehensive job description for each. Include contact names and numbers of people who have performed this job previously.
- Update the manual and job descriptions every year, tweaking job descriptions and including new information where relevant.
- Keep good records, particularly when it comes to finances. Make sure the records are clear and can be easily understood by a person without a long-term history with the committee.

Read the full interview with Caroline Harvey in Edition 2 of the *Board Builder*, which goes out on May 10. You can subscribe to the Board Builder by calling Samantha Fritz on (03) 9320 6807, emailing samanthaf@ourcommunity.com.au or visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/boardbuilder.

Thanks to those groups that have added to the Policy Bank on the Boards, Committees & Governance Centre.

The excellent feedback about our new Policy Bank has continued and we're happy that so many groups are finding the policies useful.

We are also really pleased that the "deposit and withdrawal" concept is working so well, with several groups now having contributed their own great policies for us to standardise and post up on the site.

Thanks to these very generous groups, and due to popular demand, we have now started adding a range of governance policies to the Bank. New additions include:

- [Code of Ethics Policy](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Conflict of Interest – Checklist for the Chair](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#) (for Victorian community groups)
- [Board Dispute Resolution Policy](#)

We welcome further contributions, which will allow us to post more and more policies for everyone's use as time goes on. As the old saying goes, "none of us is as smart as all of us".

Don't forget to use the Board matching service.

And we don't do it often but here is an email from the Extended Families Australian organisation on the new Board Matching service.

"I am writing on behalf of Extended Families Australia to let you know that your advertisement resulted in our finding not only one but two excellent Board members for our committee. We are very grateful for the service you provide, as there is no way we could otherwise have known of these women.

If you haven't taken the opportunity to either list a Board vacancy on the service or to have a look to see if you can provide assistance, you can do so at www.ourcommunity.com.au/board-match.

And don't forget a Board seminar coming to a town near you!

More locations for the "secrets of successful boards" seminars have been added throughout Victoria.

Check the locations and times at

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/boards/boards_article.jsp?articleId=1508 where you can also register online.

We have received great feedback on the seminars already conducted so if you are on a board or committee of management check out the options and you can register online at

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/event/register.form?eventId=4>

[Back to Top](#)

8. Budget announces five new DGR Categories from July 1, 2006.

Good news for a number of Australian community groups with the Federal Government announcing in the budget the addition of five more categories of DGR status.

The Government will establish five new general categories of deductible gift recipient (DGR) with effect from 1 July 2006, to cover:

- war memorials,
- disaster relief,
- animal welfare,
- charitable services and
- educational scholarships.

The explanation released by Treasury states that DGR will be available to:

- Funds that are established for the reconstruction and critical repair of eligible war memorials. Approved funds may be endorsed as DGRs for a maximum period of two years.
- Public funds whose principal purposes are to relieve or prevent distress caused by declared natural or man-made disasters or assist in disaster reconstruction within Australia and in developed countries.
- Charitable funds and organisations whose principal purposes are the provision of services which provide direct care to maltreated animals.
- Charitable funds that undertake a combination of activities that fall under several existing DGR categories (such as health promotion, harm prevention, public benevolent institutions).
- Charitable funds that are established and maintained solely for the purpose of providing scholarships, bursaries or prizes to promote education where entry is open to persons at a national, regional or state level. This category covers scholarships for all levels of education.

The measure will allow taxpayers to claim an income tax deduction for certain gifts of money or property to those organisations that are endorsed as DGRs under the new categories. The measure will streamline current DGR arrangements and enable organisations seeking tax deductible status to be considered under the consistent framework provided by the general categories.

In order to be a DGR, an organisation must either be endorsed under one of the general categories set out in the income tax law or be listed by name.

We will carry more details of these changes in the next edition of Our Community Matters.

[Back to Top](#)

9. Nation's Top Community Business Partnerships Recognised.

The top community business partnerships from across the country were recognised as winners of 2004 Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships, announced last month.

Senator Kay Patterson, Federal Minister for Family and Community Services and deputy chair of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, revealed the winning partnerships during a gala ceremony in Brisbane on April 13.

Winners of the small, medium and large business awards were drawn from 10 national finalists announced in mid-2004. The winning partnerships were named in five different categories:

Small Business

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

Medium Business

A South Australian based partnership between **Burns for Blinds and Youth Opportunities Association**, who worked with young people from areas with low socio-economic demographics to help them gain skills, confidence and motivation through education.

Large Business

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

Impact on a Community

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

Longevity

The special award for Longevity was won by a partnership between **Avon Products Pty Ltd, the Australian New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group and YWCA Encore Program**, for working to increase research, awareness, education and information about breast cancer since 1996. This partnership has made a real difference for women with its focus on reducing the incidence of breast cancer and supporting women who have had breast cancer surgery.

2005 Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership Awards now open

Nominations for the 2005 Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships remain open until May 6.

Partnerships can be nominated in one of a number of categories, including:

- Small business, Medium business, Large business, Multi-state awards.

In addition, special awards will be presented for:

- The business that, through its partnership, has had the greatest positive impact on its community.
- The media organisation that has most prominently and positively reported on community business partnerships and corporate social responsibility; and
- An outstanding partnership that has been operating for more than five years.

For more information on the 2005 awards, or to download a nomination form, go to the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership site by following [this Link](#).

[Back to Top](#)

10. New Risk Management Help Sheets to guide groups dealing with children and young people.

Two new free Help Sheets aimed at advising your group on issues related to working with young people and screening those who do work with children and young people are now available at Our Community's Insurance and Risk Management Centre.

While there are changes afoot to regulations in some states, the help sheets at least raise a number of the issues and practices that groups need to consider when dealing with children and young people.

The Help Sheets were prepared by Tom Reisner, a former liability underwriter who was fulfilling a field work research placement with Our Community.

The help sheet - **Minimising your Organisation's Exposure to the Risk of Child Abuse** – looks at the actions and preparation work your organisation can do to cut down chances of abuse occurring.

This help sheet includes:

- A summary of the different forms of child abuse – sexual, physical, emotional and neglect – as well as statistics on the prevalence of child abuse in Australia
- Information on how your organisation can put together a child abuse prevention policy.
- Links to a number of groups that have their own draft standard forms to help your organisation develop its own policies, procedures and standards to stop child abuse.
- Information on appropriate behaviour standards your members and volunteers should adopt when around children or young people, as well as information on the mandatory reporting of child abuse if such suspicions fell on your organisation.
- Other useful websites on the topic to refer to.

The next help sheet - **Guidelines for the Selection and Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers who may deal with Children and Young People** – outlines important information to guide the behaviour of your group, its members or volunteers, when working with young people.

This help sheet includes:

- A rundown of current employment standards for paid and unpaid workers who might be working with children or young people.
- A list of websites which can help your group find out more about employment arrangements for those who might be working with children or young people.
- A series of steps outlining the actual recruitment of such people, including guides on your group advertising the position and interviewing applicants.
- Information on conducting and following up on police checks, as well as on privacy and confidentiality issues.

The Help Sheet is at www.ourcommunity.com.au/insurance/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=1677.

The second help sheet - **What Should you do When an Allegation of Child Abuse is made Against your Organisation?** – is a detailed look at the actions your organisation should take if ever such an allegation is made against your group, a group member or volunteer.

This help sheet includes:

- Information on any indicators that child abuse may have occurred.
- The steps your organisation needs to take to respond to such an allegation, including your group's vital role in any investigation that may need to occur, or in any reporting to the police or response to such an allegation.
- How your group deals with the findings of such an investigation, and.
- Information on privacy and confidentiality issues.

The other Help Sheet is at www.ourcommunity.com.au/insurance/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=1678 and can be downloaded.

The help sheets also include a number of links to relevant websites that can help your group ensure it picks the right people to work with children and young people, as well as gain more information about child abuse-related issues. These Help Sheets are invaluable for any group that works with young people, and carefully and in detail set out processes and responses to difficult issues like potential child abuse, police checks and investigations.

[**Back to Top**](#)

11. Community Briefs

Asian Tsunami giving tops \$300m and leads to estimated 10% rise in Aussie giving.

Australian giving to Tsunami appeals will help overall giving levels in the country to rise by 10 per cent over 2005, according to research by Givewell.

The study found the Asian Tsunami appeals had now raised over \$300m. The research centre said the rise was on top of a nine per cent increase in fundraising for community organisations in 2004.

A survey of charities by Givewell also found that 39 per cent thought the Asian Tsunami Appeals would have a negative impact on their own fundraising activities while the study also found that levels of Australian giving per capita was higher than both the US and the UK.

In their annual report, Givewell found that all major financial indicators—total income, government funding, fundraising revenue, operating surplus and investments—showed an increase that was well above inflation or the growth in the economy.

According to Givewell, the greatest concern that arose from the study was a decline in the number of charities that disclose a separate figure for their fundraising costs. While the average cost ratio for 2004 was stable at 22%, only 40% of charities surveyed report those costs. This compares with 59% in 2001 and has since declined steadily each year.

Media Team announces another round of training days for non-profit groups.

Media Team Australia has announced another series of dates for workshops in various states over the next two months.

Media Team Australia (www.mediateam.com.au) is a new non-profit organisation that is harnessing the knowledge and time of a number of well-known journalists and media and marketing professionals to help community groups to establish better strategies and tactics in getting media attention.

The workshops to date have been well-received and are a great add-on for those groups that have soaked up all the media and marketing information from the Marketing, Media & Post Centre (www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapostcentre courtesy of Australia Post) and are looking for some extra advice.

Visit www.mediateam.com.au or email Annie O'Rourke at admin@mediateam.com.au.

Victorian Government announces new Social Policy.

The State Government has announced a \$788 million commitment aimed at cutting poverty and improving access to services for disadvantaged groups and individuals.

The "A Fairer Victoria" social policy package – unveiled by Minister for Victorian Communities John Thwaites late last month – is a move by the State Government to try and keep the cost of living down for disadvantaged households.

The four year plan – part of the Bracks' Government's state budget, included large allocations targeting a number of areas.

- \$180 million towards helping people with mental illnesses.
- \$101 million towards helping disadvantaged children through funding to cut kindergarten fees for low-income families, extra kindergarten places at childcare centres, and more money for children with disabilities.
- \$119 million towards respite for the families of those with disabilities, and for equipment to help people with disabilities.
- \$84 million for additional neighbourhood renewal programs in which public housing tenants are encouraged to take the lead in rejuvenating their area.
- \$50 million to help give older people more chance to live independently through expanding home care and providing 2000 more personal alert alarms.
- \$49 million to increase home ownership among poorer people.
- \$45 million to help "troubled teenagers".
- \$27 million to help indigenous Victorians and to establish "a Stolen Generations Organisation" to help stolen children and their families.

Mr Thwaites said the "frightening" statistic that 150,000 Victorian children lived in families in which no-one had a job highlighted the need for government action.

The "A Fairer Victoria" plan won widespread support from the community sector, particularly those working with disadvantaged groups such as the mentally ill and people with disabilities.

Congratulations to winners of the ABC Country Hour birthday celebrations.

Our Community is pleased to be working with the ABC and the Foundation for Regional and Rural Renewal to help celebrate the 60th anniversary of the national broadcaster's Country Hour program.

The ABC ran a competition calling on towns from across Australia to apply to have Country Hour visit for a day. The winning town in each state and territory (excluding ACT) will receive a live broadcast from the much-loved regional program plus a free BBQ, night concert and also a skills workshop.

The workshop will be conducted by Our Community in association with the FRRR, which has put up \$2500 in grants funding for each winning town.

The winners were NSW: Cumnock; NT: Pine Creek; QLD: Cooktown; SA: Oodnadatta; TAS: Riana; VIC: Rainbow; WA: Hyden.

[Back to Top](#)

12. Fast Forward

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send it 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 www.ourcommunity.com.au from their own websites. You can find them in 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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[Back to Top](#)