

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

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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. Our Community provides community groups with the latest funding and fundraising news as well as practical management, board, marketing and community business partnership information. Our Community also operates the [Australian Giving Centre](#), the free online donation service that has so far raised almost \$5 million for Australian community appeals. A summary of our services is listed at the end of this newsletter. If you have trouble reading this newsletter or have any comments please let us know by emailing kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au

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1. Welcome by Rhonda Galbally AO, CEO of www.ourcommunity.com.au

Welcome to the latest edition of Our Community Matters.

This edition we're delighted to bring you news of a very exciting initiative that is going to result in real financial savings for community organisations around Australia.

After two years of work with Our Community and careful studying of community needs, Westpac has announced a new suite of banking products created specifically for community organisations. The new products include a fee-free day-to-day account, some highly competitive investment options and much more.

Westpac deserves rich plaudits for showing a sincere and practical commitment to community and an acute awareness of how the company can best support community organisations. (Congratulations also to Westpac for topping, for the third year running, the annual Australian Corporate Responsibility Index, which was released yesterday.)

I urge every community organisation to have a look at what the new **Community Solutions** accounts are offering and compare them to your existing bank accounts and see what savings can be achieved.

I also encourage you to visit the recently revamped Community Financial Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/finance, which features a range of financial information and help sheets, as well as the ever-popular free Guide for Community Treasurers.

The other big thing on our agenda this month has been the continuing preparations for our huge **Communities in Control** conference, which is being held in Melbourne on June 19 and 20 (with a special day for fundraising on the 18th). There are still places available so book as soon as you can.

Like last year, we're running a pre-conference 'State of the Community' survey to try to get an overview of how the community sector is travelling and what the current issues are. It would great if as many people as possible could get online and complete the survey – it shouldn't take you more than five minutes – so we can get a really good look at what you think are the issues that need most attention. The survey's at www.ourcommunity.com.au/communitysurvey2006. If you're interested in last year's results, they're online at www.ourcommunity.com.au/communitysurvey2005.

I have been out and about this month delivering quite a few speeches on community and related matters. On May 5 I spoke at RMIT about how university had provided the training ground for the activism and interest in social justice that has informed so much of my later life. Last Thursday, I was in Tasmania speaking about 'Romantic Communities' – the good, the bad, and the ugly. And this week I'm off to a Business Leaders Forum in Brisbane to talk about Corporate Social Responsibility within a community context. If you're interested in reading any of these speeches, you can do so at www.ourcommunity.com.au/speeches.

I'd also like to make special mention of a new book that has come across my desk that aims to further the understanding of depression – an important community issue. Published by Penguin, the book, *Understanding Depression*, by freelance health writer and broadcaster Maria Prendergast, includes information on the definition, diagnosis, types and effects of depression, as well as treatment and recovery options. It also includes a series of intimate interviews with people from all walks of life who have survived the illness.

On a rather sad note, I'd like to finish by paying tribute to a great man and friend, and a speaker at last year's Communities in Control conference, Rick Farley, who died in Sydney over the weekend. Rick was a passionate advocate for rural Australia and a leader in the integration of reconciliation and environment into rural community priorities. He will be sadly missed.

The next edition of this newsletter will go out early next month. We'd love to hear your ideas and feedback, which you can send to kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au.

RHONDA GALBALLY AO
Chief Executive Officer

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2. Westpac's Community Solutions cuts fees and charges for community organisations

For the past two years, Our Community has had a highly successful partnership with Westpac Bank – a partnership that has already resulted in many benefits for Australian community organisations, including the highly successful, practical and free **Guide for Community Treasurers** and other financial literacy resources.

The partnership has also seen Westpac sponsor the Australian Giving Centre, through which almost \$5 million has been donated to Australian community organisations via the free online donations service at **www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving**.

These services have been a real boon for Australian community organisations – but the best is yet to come!

Both Our Community and Westpac know that one of the most valuable things any company can do for community organisations is to help improve their bottom line.

With that in mind we are very excited to announce a new suite of banking products that will do just that – Westpac's **Community Solutions**.

The Community Solutions suite of financial products and services is tailored specifically to the needs of not-for-profit organisations. These are not re-branded or re-badged products; Community Solutions breaks the mould in banking products, providing tailored information, tools, resources – and prices – that will help your organisation get ahead.

Community Solutions includes a simple day-to-day account for community organisations that has NO monthly service fee, NO transaction fees, 24-hour access to your funds, plus optional cheque access.

The package also includes special investment, overdraft and finance facilities which include waived or discounted fees, resulting in hundreds of dollars worth of savings for every community organisation.

Westpac is also waiving or reducing fees for community organisations for services and products relating to credit cards, EFTPOS facilities (standard and mobile), online payments, and more.

The Community Solutions package is just the latest iteration of Westpac's long-term commitment to the Australian community sector. The bank has a long tradition of partnership with a range of community organisations, as well as programs that encourage and support Westpac staff who choose to make a commitment to the community.

Community Solutions has been designed to cater for the **real needs** of community organisations, and we urge every community organisation in Australia to find out how you can use these products and services to make all your financial transactions easier and cheaper.

All of the details are online at Our Community's recently revamped Community Financial Centre (which also includes links to the Guide for Community Treasurers and a range of free financial help sheets and articles) at **www.ourcommunity.com.au/finance**, and on the Westpac website at **www.westpac.com.au/communitysolutions**.

This would not have occurred without the leadership shown by Mike Pratt, Group Executive, Business & Consumer Banking, and David Morgan, CEO, Westpac, as well as their staff, and of course the staff of Our Community. May the revolution in banking for community groups continue. Well done Westpac.

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3. Communities in Control: Beyond the Power of One

Working in the community sector can grind you down – or it can lift you up. In our daily work we can feel isolated, unsupported, unheard, and unappreciated – a recipe for burnout. That's why Our Community runs the Communities in Control Conference every year.

The Communities in Control conference is the annual opportunity for Australian community organisations to come together with government (federal, state and local), public health, and business, to challenge and be challenged; and to hear the latest about the importance of stronger communities to social health and social and economic development.

Each year we select an enlivening mix of speakers with expertise across the work of the sector. This year we have leading author Bryce Courtenay, ACTU President Sharan Burrow, international thinker on community

development Professor Meredith Minkler, and a host of others, all with important insights to offer on the road forward for community organisations like yours.

Each year, though, we have people who say that while the speakers were great the highlight of the conference for them was the chance to meet other people from the sector and exchange stories, tips, and strategies.

That's why this year's conference is called "Beyond the Power of One" – we're celebrating not only the leadership role of people and organisations but also celebrating the synergy that comes from many leaders and many groups working together for the public good – local government, community organisations, schools, ethnic groups, charities, sport and cultural organisations, and many others.

At the conference you meet the people who understand your problems. You network with groups who can contribute to your outcomes. You hear from speakers addressing your problems. And you get a chance to lift your gaze up from the daily grind to the big picture for your field, your sector, and our society.

At Our Community we know the importance of standing together to maximise the impact of the community on bureaucrats, politicians, and the media – but it's not just about them, it's about you. Take the time to have a breather, touch base with others in the sector and reflect on what you're doing, why you're doing it and what you're achieving. You'll leave the conference cheered, enlivened, informed, and ready to put your new ideas into practice. Last year more than 100 participants out of the total of 1500 went back to their own communities and ran local forums to inspire new visions and new action.

One attendee summed it up: "This has been the most important conference with the most inspiring speakers I have ever seen in 24 years of community life. I cried, I laughed, I reflected, but most of all I learned so much. I am now ready to take on the world – and my world is a tiny NSW town. Bravo."



Book your place or find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic.

2006 State of the Community Survey

As part of the Communities in Control conference, Our Community is running the second annual **State of the Community** survey.

We want to know how your community organisation is travelling, how you think the community sector in general is going, and the issues you think are the most pressing in today's climate.

The results will be revealed at the conference, and in this newsletter.

To take part in the survey, go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/communitysurvey2006.

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4. Community geographic domain names up for grabs

Community organisations will soon be able to apply to set up an internet address that reflects the geographic address of their locality – e.g. shepparton.vic.au; esperance.wa.au, etc.

Community based not-for-profit organisations that are able to demonstrate that they represent the local community will be able to apply for one of the new Community Geographic Domain Names from July.

The project will see the creation of community website portals that reflect community interests such as local business, tourism, historical information, culture, special interest groups, events, news and media.

The establishment of standardised place-based, community-driven web addresses is a world first, according to .au Community Domains (.auCD), a not-for-profit company set up to manage the new Community Geographic Domain Names.

“Community Geographic Domain Names (CGDNs) provide the world’s first intuitive, standardised naming system to enable better access to local community, tourism and business information to help facilitate social, cultural, economic and sustainable benefits,” the organisation says.

“A pilot study was carried out in three localities – Ballarat, Bathurst and Wollongong.

“A review of the pilot study indicated there was broad acceptance and enthusiasm in the community for this initiative.”

The Wollongong website, for example, (at www.wollongong.nsw.au) includes alphabetical category-based listings of Wollongong community groups, businesses, and government and educational services, plus a list of local events and tourist information.

From July 2006 auCD will be providing an online “how to” kit to help communities set up a website group, apply for a Community Geographic Domain Name licence, and develop and sustain their community portals.

Community organisations can find out more about the initiative or register their interest in a Community Geographic Domain Name at the auCD website at www.aucd.org.au.

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5. Productive Giving – for tax or for good

It’s coming up to the end of the financial year, which is the charitable equivalent of Christmas. More people give around tax time than at any other time of year. Filling out the tax forms reminds them about the existence of deductible gifts.

If you’re contemplating making merit for yourself at this time, look over the following checklist (it’s also going to be useful if you want to induce others to give).

Give to causes you care about

Take the time to decide what’s important to you. What do you feel passionately about? Give proportionally. You’re paying to have your concerns dealt with, whether they’re about children with autism or saving the Little Desert – how much would it be worth to you to make your dreams come true? It’d be more than a \$2 gold coin, for sure.

Give around

You care about more than one thing, so you can give to a range of projects – more to some, less to others, depending on how close they are to your core values. Reward the ones that are doing well, throw a line to the ones that are struggling.

Don’t just go by other people’s priorities

Don’t give just to the big organisations, or the ones that can afford to send you mail. In particular, don’t just give to deductible charities, even if it is tax time. The Australian Tax Office isn’t necessarily any better at picking winners than you are. A community group without tax deductible status probably needs the money more and will be even more grateful. Support your causes.

Give to groups that make a difference

Look around your community – whether it’s a local community, a cultural or ethnic community, or a community of interest – to see which organisations are out there shaking things up. What changes have taken place, and who or what’s been behind them?

Read up on the target

Have a look online to check out the goals and strategies of your selected organisation. Does it give for long-term or short-term achievements (does it lobby for legislative change to reduce poverty, or does it just hand out soup to poor people)? How independent is it of government? Is it receiving any funding from people, companies and states you have reservations about?

Kick the tyres

Only a tiny minority of community groups have any trouble with shonks, cheats or chancers, but it won’t hurt to take precautions. Satisfy yourself that the money’s going to be properly accounted for and properly spent. What proportion of the organisation’s fundraising reaches the coalface? Steer away from scandals.

Follow up your gift

If an organisation is worth funding, it’s worth following up on. Get back to them in July to see how well their strategic plans are progressing. Become involved.

Come to the Australian Giving Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving

Our Community has tapped the latest developments in technology to make giving easier for both the person who's giving and the group that's getting. Explore the mechanism from both ends. Look through the list of appeals to see what causes call out for your support.

6. Fundraisers: Do not call, do not spam

The Victorian Government has urged its federal counterparts to ensure charities are exempt from the planned "do not call" register, proposed to protect consumers from nuisance telemarketing calls.

Expected to be operational next year, the register would allow people to have their name put on a list which telemarketers and similar organisations are banned from ringing. Penalties – including fines – would be levied against those who break the ban.

The Victorian and New South Wales Governments led a lobbying campaign aimed at Federal Communications Minister Helen Coonan to gain support for the register. The campaign attracted some 20,000 calls to a phone poll supporting the move.

However, Victorian Consumer Affairs Minister Marsha Thomson said it was vital that charities were part of a "clear and consistent exemptions policy" under the new rules, allowing them to make calls and solicit for funds.

"Senator Coonan must now consult the States and Territories to ensure all telemarketers are covered by the legislation and that consistent laws and standards apply across all jurisdictions," she said.

War on Spam

Meanwhile, America is on the verge of introducing charges for bulk email – not for the money (they say) but to reduce spam – in a move that could have major effects on not-for-profit fundraising.

American net giant AOL is working with tech firm Goodmail to set up a certified email charging plan for those that send millions of messages. For small fees ranging from 0.25 of a cent to one cent per message, bulk email senders could bypass AOL's junk mail filters and be sure that their messages get delivered to users.

AOL said the plan would reduce the amount of junk mail that people received because spammers and phishers were unlikely to pay the high fees required.

More than 50 American not-for-profit groups have banded together to condemn AOL's charging plan on the grounds that (a) it would cost their organisations money and (b) it would restrict free speech.

In a concession to these groups, AOL has now said not-for-profit organisations will be exempt from the charges – AOL would pay their mailing fees to ensure that their messages got through.

While the definition of not-for-profit will probably raise some issues, there is also considerable upside in this for not-for-profits. If their messages are no longer purged as spam or deleted without reading along with the online junk then their strike rate could be expected to go up markedly. (It is difficult to believe, though, that spammers will not find a way to fight back; they always have before.)

While locally the charging scheme does not represent an immediate danger or an immediate gain, the Australian not-for-profit sector needs to think about what its response would be to such a proposal gaining traction here.

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7. Great Australian Leaders in Focus: Marcus Godinho

This month's Great Australian Leader in Focus is the Executive Director of Environment Victoria, **Marcus Godinho**. Before committing himself to the environment in 1998, Marcus spent seven years working for Mobil Oil and the National Australia Bank, managing community, government and media relations. He went on to work with the Australia Conservation Foundation and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Victoria, and sat on the national board of the Wilderness Society, before joining Environment Victoria in September 2001.

Our Community: Who do you consider to be the three great leaders of our time?

Marcus Godinho:

1. Peter Garrett – He used his profile from Midnight Oil to help so many causes. Despite his success he remains incredibly personable, down to earth and fun. He has amazing communication skills.

2. Miles Davis – He never stood still or became comfortable with his achievements. He kept taking jazz in different directions.
3. Nelson Mandela – His sacrifice and commitment.

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

Marcus Godinho:

1. Visionary and strategic – to have strong sense of what the future could look like and how to get there
2. Rapport – to build strong relationships with people by taking time to understand, support and lead them
3. Dedication, commitment and persistence

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

Marcus Godinho:

1. We are losing our sense of community, including the responsibility we have to give back
2. Marketing is increasingly encouraging us to indulge in ourselves; making us more egocentric
3. People feel as though there is nothing they can do about the “problems with the world”

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

Marcus Godinho:

- Understand yourself – your strengths, your weaknesses, how you impact others.
- Think deeply about what you want to achieve and make a commitment.
- Build a solid support network. It's not always going to be easy, and you'll need friends, family, colleagues from time to time.

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

Marcus Godinho: Both, but more the latter. You inherit skills that can help be a leader, but it's far more about your upbringing, role models and what you've been exposed to. Communication skills, a sense of responsibility ... these are things that you develop over time.

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

Marcus Godinho:

1. We are one of the most unsustainable societies in the world. The greenhouse pollution we produce per person is amongst the highest in the world. Despite being the driest continent we have an incredible thirst.
2. We have one of the highest levels of economic literacy in the world. Our politicians and the media are fixated by the economy. Our obsession with economic growth has come at a terrible cost. We value economic health too far above everything else.
3. Our society – politicians, businesses – think in incredibly short time horizons.

Our Community: What insights have you gained personally on your leadership journey and how have they impacted on your style of leadership?

Marcus Godinho:

- Understand your strengths and bat with them. Be aware of your weaknesses.
- Surround yourself with people who complement, making up for your weaknesses.
- Never take the support of the people you rely on for granted. Tune into their internal radio station.

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

Marcus Godinho:

- Ron Burke – My boss at Mobil and National Australia Bank. He instilled in me a sense of responsibility to the community and the importance of being well-rounded. A true renaissance man.
- Don Henry, Executive Director, Australian Conservation Foundation – He has been an incredible coach in politics over the years and a friend to enjoy some important timeout with.
- My mother – Her work ethic and inner strength has always been an inspiration.

For more community leadership wisdom, visit the Australian Community Leadership Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/leadership.

8. Clarifying liability as easy as ABC

A recent case in the Victorian Supreme Court has clarified the responsibility of an organisation when its employees do something wrong.

You're an organisation providing a service, one of your staff members does something stupid or worse, and a law is breached. You didn't tell them to do it, or allow them to do it, or have anything to do with it whatsoever, so it seems rather unfair that you're the one who's prosecuted for it.

That was the argument of one child care centre proprietor in *ABC Developmental Learning Centres Pty Ltd v Wallace [2006] VSC 171 (3 May 2006)* (<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VSC/2006/171.html>), and any of us who have to hire staff to do work can probably sympathise with them.

A child in one of ABC's child care centres had found a large foam block and used it to climb over the fence and wander away (after a short panic, luckily, he was found unharmed).

The Department of Human Services prosecuted ABC in the Magistrates' Court for breaching s. 26 of the Victorian *Children's Services Act 1996*, which requires the proprietor of such a centre, and its staff, to ensure that every reasonable precaution was taken to protect children in its care from any hazard likely to cause injury.

An acting magistrate found the child got out because ABC's staff failed to observe and prevent him – and that ABC was ultimately responsible for the failures of its staff, fining the company \$200 without recording a conviction. The company appealed to the Victorian Supreme Court as a matter of principle.

ABC said that they shouldn't be held liable if they had good systems in place, if they didn't know the standard was being breached, or if the employee was acting contrary to instructions. What more, they asked, could have been done?

The Supreme Court found that all these arguments, even if true, missed the point. It won't always be the case, the Supreme Court said, that an action of the employee is taken as an action of the organisation – that depends on the circumstances, and on the particular Act. But

“Where legislation lays down a standard of action or behaviour in the public interest, a company, being an abstract legal entity, can observe the standard only through human agents. To return to my case examples, the company must have employees or similar persons to properly take care of children. If the persons appointed by the company to observe the standard do not do so, it would frustrate the objectives of the legislation if the company could not be held criminally liable.

“The imposition of criminal liability is one important way by which persons, including companies, are held accountable for breaching regulatory standards which, on pain of such liability, they are obliged to observe. Therefore, where appropriate, the courts will fashion a rule of attribution that counts, as a company's, the actions of employees, of whatever level, whose work involves the performance of a regulatory obligation on the company's behalf.”

The ABC case was concerned with statutory duties, not private damages, but it's still a clear warning that your risk management plan (see www.ourcommunity.com.au/riskmanagement) really has to work on the assumption that your organisation is going to be held responsible for virtually anything that goes wrong. It may not sound very fair, but as the Mikado says,

“I'm really very sorry for you all, but it's an unjust world, and virtue is triumphant only in theatrical performances.”

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9. One in five not-for-profit organisations suffered fraud: report

A total of 19% of not-for-profit organisations responding a recent survey had experienced fraud in the past two years, although the losses suffered were less than those experienced in the commercial sector, new research has revealed.

Most instances of fraud in the not-for-profit sector resulted in losses of less than \$50,000, well below the average fraud of \$337,734 in large organisations in the public and private sector, according to the research by chartered accountant and advisory firm BDO.

Other major findings included:

- The largest number of frauds reported occurred in organisations in the \$1 million - \$10 million turnover bracket.
- Cash theft and expense account fraud were reported as the most common types of fraud perpetrated.
- In not-for-profit organisations the typical fraudster is female, in her forties and a paid non-accounting employee.
- Only 15% of fraud was committed by unpaid volunteers.
- Financial problems and pressures (26%), maintaining a lifestyle (19%) and revenge (17%) were the three key motivations behind why a person committed fraud.
- 85% of survey participants considered fraud prevention to be important, very important or extremely important to the organisation.
- 34% of frauds were uncovered by internal controls, 37% by tips from employees, volunteers or others.
- Strong internal controls (42%) and an ethical culture (31%) within the organisation were considered important in reducing the risk of fraud along with internal audit (28%).

The research, which involved analysis of 547 responses from Australian and New Zealand not-for-profit organisations, was carried out in conjunction with the Not-For-Profit Network and Queensland University of Technology.

Report author Lisa Bundensen said 58% of the reported fraud was discovered within a year of it commencing, which helped account for the fact that 89% of frauds resulted in losses of less than \$50,000.

"While the results have been positive overall for the not-for-profit sector, organisations must not let their guard down in their fight against fraud – vigilance is imperative," she said.

Our Community recommends a range of basic risk management procedures to minimise the likelihood of fraud occurring in your organisation:

1. All cheques should contain two signatures – three to four people in the organisation should be authorised signatories, but no two related people should be included in that list – i.e. no husband/wife, mother/daughter, girlfriend/boyfriend, aunt/nephew etc. combinations.
2. For organisations that use internet banking, ensure at least two "keys" are needed to access the account – this is the electronic equivalent of requiring two signatures on a cheque.
3. Cheques should never be signed in advance. If a signatory is taking extended leave, formally transfer their authority to another group member.
4. Receipting and banking should be undertaken by two people – i.e. the person that receives money should not be the person that banks it.
5. Put in place clear guidelines on authorisation of spending – who can spend, how much they can spend, what they can spend on, what means they can use to spend.
6. Where credit cards are in use, ensure there is a clear credit card policy in place and followed.
7. Ensure your annual auditing is meaningful – make sure you know and spell out exactly what you want the auditor to look at.
8. Ask questions – don't take any information provided on face value; don't withhold questions so as not to offend the treasurer.
9. Ensure a Treasurer's Report is tabled at every Board/Committee meeting. This should include an explanation of how the organisation is performing against the budget, the bank reconciliation, and – importantly – up-to-the-minute bank statements.

For more detailed information about fraud risk management, refer to the Community Treasurer's Guide – available online at www.ourcommunity.com.au/treasurer.

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10. Reader Feedback

We love to hear your views on community sector issues and we also love to receive feedback about the articles we run in Our Community Matters.

One reader writes ...

"The article in your newsletter implied that the Tax Office was considering pre-populating tax returns. I believe they are more than 'considering' it – it's to be rolled out throughout Australia in 2007 or maybe 2008.

"There is a lot of risk involved in pre-population – much more scary than possible problems with storing data, very particularly with the risk of incorrect postings.

"Imagine our donor base losing their tax stability because of a mistaken posting! The charity is going to bear the brunt of the ill will, despite them being the innocent victims. There is such a fragile balance between good and ill will when it comes to conscience giving. I see it making the fundraising task far harder than it's ever been. If/when it happens to a business it costs in productivity, but at least the average business person is used to having people puddle around in their financial affairs. Not so with the philanthropic community.

"My understanding is it's going to be up to the taxpayer to argue their case in a very sudden-death time frame – and suffer the reputation damage, stress, and financial losses which can result in the meantime – the ATO won't be paying compensation when their computer gets it wrong! The potential for social harm in this regard is very real.

"It would be interesting to know how the ATO could get around privacy legislation. I understand it's illegal for your group or mine to cross-match data from multiple sources – if NFP's were to provide information to the ATO knowing they will be used to create a secondary source – does that make them culpable?

"I believe this is an issue that should be open to public debate – long before it's brought down upon us.

"Scar tissue is THE stone in everyone's shoe - and this little pebble from the tax man has the potential to leave a lot of scars.

"Cheers - and thanks again for such a great newsletter & service!"

[FLASHBACK]

Eighty per cent say "no" to proposed changes to DGR reporting

"In the March edition of Our Community Matters, we brought you the news that the Australian Tax Office (ATO) was looking at the possibility of making changes to the way Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) organisations reported on donations.

"The Tax Office was seeking preliminary views on an idea that DGR organisations could notify them when someone made a donation, so that they could 'pre-populate' gift labels on individuals' electronic tax returns. The ATO suggested that this would 'make the experience of lodging tax returns for individuals easier'.

"However, as we pointed out in the March OC Matters, there are a number of possible risks involved in a process that asks not-for-profit organisations to collect and store their donors' tax file numbers. In particular, there is the likelihood that this would create extra work and expense for not-for-profit organisations.

"Submissions to the ATO on this issue closed earlier this month and the office has advised that 80% of respondents were against the proposal. A further 10% agreed with the change, and the remainder indicated no particular preference either way."

(Our Community Matters – April 2006)

Please send your comments on this issue or any others affecting the community sector to kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au.

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11. Community Briefs

Board/Committee renewal

Finding a path to healthy renewal is a common trouble-spot for many community group boards and committees – we often hear of groups that are struggling to bring in new members to replace those who are moving on, or perhaps should be moving on.

This month's edition of the **Board Builder** takes a close-up look at some of the things community organisations can do to ensure regular and healthy renewal and succession.

The 'Board Doctors' examine the issue of whether putting in place limited terms is a good tool for pruning old wood, while leading community development practitioner and educator Jim Cavaye looks at how real succession planning should be much more than just a scramble to replace someone who's leaving.

As part of his article, Dr Cavaye provides a health check for boards and committees to assess how well their board is set up for renewal and succession, asking:

- **How much happens between meetings?** If you're meeting tonight, and the last meeting was two months ago, and not a lot has happened in between, then that's a telltale sign that you may need to renew the vision and the enthusiasm in the organisation.
- **Does everyone attend meetings?** Are people turning up enthusiastically, or are you struggling to get a quorum?
- **Covering "old ground".** If you're on a board that seems to be going over the same things over and over, that's a telltale sign that you've got to rethink your mission and what you're all about.
- **Burnout.** Having people on your board who feel burned out is another bad symptom of a poorly functioning board.
- **Planning but limited action.** In the literature this is called 'fantasy planning'. People prepare comprehensive plans, but nothing much happens.
- **How much "air time" does each member have?** Do a few dominant individuals monopolise the meetings, or are they open, collaborative, and welcoming?

You can subscribe to the Board Builder – Australia's most useful not-for-profit governance publication – or find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/boardbuilder.

Becoming the sort of place where people want to work

The latest edition of the Our Community/Deloitte corporate social responsibility publication, ***Business Community Intelligence*** (BCI), is also out this week.

This edition takes an in-depth look at the "employer of choice" issue – how companies can attract and retain the best and brightest employees in a tight labour market.

As editor Dr Annie Duncan writes, CSR is not just about how companies relate to the world outside; it's also about how they work internally. Some of the major lessons from this edition of BCI include:

- Being an 'employer of choice' means that people will choose to work for the success of the company, that recruiting will be easier, and turnover will be lower. And all this is good for business.
- The costs to recruit a new employee have been estimated at two to four times the annual salary for that position. Companies should spend 90% of their effort on retaining current staff and 10% on recruiting new people, yet many do the opposite.
- Salary is only one consideration in people's decision to join or leave a company. What many are more interested in is the type of company you are, and what you do for your people, the community and the environment.
- Currently, diversity is the most maligned and neglected part of the CSR agenda; yet diverse workplaces benefit from the creative spark of different views about 'the best way', from a happier and more committed workforce, and from the fact that potential customers are much more likely to favour businesses that reflect their own diverse qualities.

This edition of BCI also contains all the latest news, views and interviews on a range of CSR topics. You can find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/bci.

Your Fundraising Habits: from the horse's mouth

Thanks to everyone who responded to our Raising Funds survey and shared information about your fundraising habits with us.

The survey, which was designed to help make our **Raising Funds** newsletter even more relevant and responsive, uncovered a few interesting trends among our members, including:

- **More groups are moving away from holding a major yearly fundraiser**, with only 44% of respondents staging this type of major annual event. Of those that did hold this type of event, almost 27% said they raised more than \$10,000.
- **Three-quarters of survey respondents stage a series of smaller fundraisers each year** – some in addition to a larger annual event, others relying on the smaller fundraisers solely. More than half of those who responded to the question said they held two or three of these smaller fundraisers each year. On average, these smaller fundraisers were most likely to raise between \$200 and \$2000.

- **Applying for grants, selling items and holding special events** were where most of respondents' fundraising money came from.
- **For those who held special events, the most commonly held were concert/dinner/party-type events followed by fetes.** A wide variety of different fundraising special events were staged— including a number of quiz and movie nights.

We've made a number of changes to Raising Funds – the sister publication to the ever-popular EasyGrants newsletter – as a result of your comments.

If you are not a subscriber and would like to receive a sample copy of the newsletter, please email Alan Matic (alanm@ourcommunity.com.au) or find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/raisingfunds.

Community services struggling with growing demands

Community services were unable to meet the growing demands for help and assistance they received last financial year, according to a new Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) survey.

The *Australian Community Sector Survey 2006*, released in April, was based on responses from almost 1200 community services which helped more than 2.7 million people across the country in the 12 months to June 2005.

It found:

- A 9% increase in the number of people helped in 2004-05 compared to the previous year.
- Organisations were forced to turn away 29% more people eligible for help during the 2004-05 period in comparison to the year before.
- Many people using services had multiple disadvantages – for example, more than half of the service users were jobless and a third of them had a disability.
- 15% of people using services were Indigenous, while more than a fifth were from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

The survey found that although community services had a variety of government funding sources, they had been forced to increase the amount of funding received through those they work with (10% in 2004-05, up from 5% the year before), paid via fees.

ACOSS director Andrew Johnson said the lack of resources meant 132,000 eligible people could not get help through community services last year.

"Some services such as housing assistance and legal services really struggle to meet demand," he said.

Following the release of the Federal Government's May budget last week, Mr Johnson welcomed the government's commitments to increase investment in mental health, child care subsidies for parents studying, carer payments and aged and disability care.

"ACOSS would like to see greater investment in services like housing, Indigenous health, dental care, child care, supports and services for jobless Australians to change the lives of people on low incomes," he said.

ACOSS President Lin Hatfield Dodds said while low-income Australians in paid work had gained through adjustments to income tax and family payments changes, ACOSS had been hoping for "greater investment in solutions to provide better quality, more accessible and affordable services".

National Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week will be celebrated around the country from May 27 to June 3.

The theme of this year's event – "Reconciliation: take the next step" – is designed to reflect the reality that while the Bridge Walks that occurred in Sydney and other areas of Australia during 2000 were an important demonstration of the willingness of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to move forward together, there is still much to be done to build relationships that will achieve better outcomes for all.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of National Reconciliation Week, which offers people across Australia the opportunity to focus on reconciliation, to hear about the culture and history of Australia's Indigenous people, and to explore new and better ways of meeting challenges in our communities.

It is also a time for people to renew their commitment to reconciliation and think about how they can help turn around the continuing disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

You can find more information about National Reconciliation Week activities on the Reconciliation Australia website at www.reconciliation.org.au.

More money, ideas needed to help rural Australia: report

Community service organisation Mission Australia has called on the Federal Government to work with community organisations and business to improve equality between rural/regional and metropolitan areas of Australia.

The organisation's new report – *Rural and Regional Australia: Change, Challenge, Capacity* – points out that:

- 72% of students in metropolitan areas complete Year 12, compared to 62% in regional centres.
- 16% of non-metropolitan households have a weekly income of \$300 or less (compared with 13% of metropolitan households).
- Supported accommodation services are provided to victims of domestic violence at a rate of two per 1000 people in metropolitan areas, compared to almost 12 per 1000 in "remote" areas and 17 per 1000 in "very remote" areas.
- The rate of alcohol-related deaths among young people in non-metro areas is 1.7 times higher than the same group in the major cities.

The report says one of the biggest mistakes in looking at these issues is to treat rural and regional Australia as a "homogenous entity, made up solely of farming families", as the reality is much different.

While some rural and regional communities were doing well, others - including particular groups within them – struggled.

The report recommends:

- A national rural mental health strategy and extra health resources for rural communities.
- A new national apprenticeship program, specifically aimed at girls and young women in rural areas, to improve training and career development.
- Greater use of mobile outreach and IT-based service delivery, particularly in the area of education, to improve service delivery and reduce social isolation in rural and remote communities.
- Additional resources for existing rural assistance programs.
- More robust and comprehensive assessments of the impact of government policies on rural and regional communities.

RMIT seeks community placements

RMIT's Social Science program is designed for students who want to work in community sector organisations, the public sector (state and local govt departments), and within large private corporations or small business.

Graduates work in positions involving policy development, social research, direct service provision, Human Resources management, dispute resolution, social planning, and management.

The field placement complements their academic studies and gives students a taste of professional work in their vocational choice before graduation.

These students require supervision when on work placement and there is the assumption of professional practice by both the student and the organisation.

Often the placements lead to some sort of job offer or an entrance to a preferred career pathway. The placements are seen to benefit both the organisation and the student.

Community organisations wanting further information on this student placement program should contact Peter Allsop by email to peter.allsop@rmit.edu.au. Those interested in taking students need to contact RMIT before Tuesday, May 30.

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12. Community Jobs

A selection of community jobs from Our Community's latest *Good Moves* newsletter:



ACT

Job Title	Organisation	
<i>Policy and Liaison Officer</i>	Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia Inc. (FECCA)	<u>Details</u>

QLD

Job Title	Organisation	
<i>Education Advocate/Case Manager</i>	Cape York Partnerships	<u>Details</u>
<i>Instructional Designer</i>	Cape York Partnerships	<u>Details</u>
<i>Team Facilitator</i>	Cape York Partnerships	<u>Details</u>

VIC

Job Title	Organisation	
<i>Administration Officer</i>	Footscray Rental Housing Cooperative	<u>Details</u>
<i>Gatekeeper</i>	Donvale Football Club Incorporated	<u>Details</u>
<i>Canteen Manager</i>	Donvale Football Club Incorporated	<u>Details</u>
<i>Agency Liaison Officer</i>	Wimmera Primary Care Partnership	<u>Details</u>
<i>Communications & Information Coordinator</i>	Women's Health West	<u>Details</u>

www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs

www.ourcommunity.com.au - Good Moves Newsletter

Your best choice to find and advertise a job

13. Fast Forward

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send it onto your friends and fellow community groups in your area.

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

14. About Our Community

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise providing:

1. www.ourcommunity.com.au - Australia's most useful website and publishing house, encompassing the nation's largest and most diverse membership base and 15 knowledge and service hubs - accelerating the impact of Australia's 700,000 community organisations
2. **Australian Institute for Community Practice and Governance** - practical and accessible certificated training delivered locally through our training Institute
3. **Centre for Best Practice in Grantmaking** - the unique suite of grantmaking services for government
4. **Centre for Community-Business Partnerships** - cutting edge Corporate Social Responsibility resources for large, medium and small business and community organisations

Our Community's website currently consists of 15 major Centres of Excellence.

Make a Difference

- **Australian Giving Centre**: Helping Individuals and Workplaces Give in Every Way
- **Community & Business Partnerships**: Connect, Make a Difference and Form a Partnership
- **Boards, Committees & Governance Centre**: Build a Better Board; Be a Better Board Member; and Find a Board Position

Find & Manage Money

- **Community Funding Centre**: Helping all Community Groups and Schools Find Money
- **Community Financial Centre**: Banking Solutions and Services
- **Best Practice in Grantmaking**: Achieving Best Practice with Grants, Awards and Scholarship Programs

Build Capacity

- **Marketing, Media & Post Centre**: Delivering Better Results for Community Groups
- **Management and Training Centre**: The A-Z of Resources for Managing Community Groups
- **Leadership Centre**: Community Groups Can Do: Leadership
- **Communities in Control**: Giving Voice – and Support – to Grassroots Community Groups
- **Jobs / Recruitment**: The First Place for Good Moves in the Community Sector
- **Best of Community**: The First and Best Place for Community

Buy Supplies & Be Informed

- **Community Marketplace**: Providing all Community Groups with Excellent Value Products and Services
- **The Insurance & Risk Management Centre**: Helping Community Groups Manage Risk and Secure Insurance
- **TechCommunity Centre**: Technology Resources and Services for Community Groups.

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