

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

July edition 2004

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

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

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

Welcome to Our Community Matters

I hope that everyone has well and truly settled down again after the marvellous energy and excitement from last month's Communities in Control conference. I am still coming down from the high of being together with so many creative, committed people all wanting to community groups to be respected, celebrated, supported and most important of all – in control.

The feedback on post conference action is still streaming in. Some localities are running their own version of CIC Conferences – community groups leading the agenda for their own development and bringing local government and business in as equal partners.

I have heard from over 50 groups that are re-examining their governance to beef up the community in control part – this means in part representation (so the organisation is genuinely owned by community and/or consumers and not becoming totally corporatised). On the other hand groups are recognising the importance of some of the skills from business – especially smaller business - to community boards. Just running a small business and surviving brings a wealth of knowledge about finances, marketing, and survival – invaluable to many community groups operating on the smell of oily rags.

Another group of emails have come from groups who have taken particular social action about a range of issues. An example is from Dawn King – her group is the Smith's Beach Ramp Project. It task has been to campaign to build an access ramp onto Smith's beach – one of the most beautiful beaches in Victoria (on Phillip Island). From the Communities in Control conference, they say that they gained renewed energy and great fundraising ideas for a project they're been struggling with for some time. Not only have they now raised enough funds for the ramp (built by TAFE students – giving them good practice), they also have fundraised a whole lot more to build an accessible toilet block.

Talking about one of my favourite words – community fundraising, it has gained another enormous boost from the outstanding results from the Our Community giving centre found at http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving/giving_main.jsp

In one month over \$128,000 was raised for the groups who have signed up with the Giving Centre to receive donations online. This was double the total from last year – and importantly the number of people visiting the giving site also doubled.

Don't forget, this is a completely free service to donors and the community groups. We cross-subsidise this and all of the other free services from our publications program. So every community group should ring us on 03 9320 6800 and we will help you sign up and get up on the Giving Centre donations list. At the worst nobody will donate to your group. But if you let people know in your network and the wider community (using marketing tools from the management centre http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet_list.do?categoryid=394 you will be surprised at how interested the community is beginning to become in donating online. And don't forget that we encourage (and facilitate) other ways of donating to your group – by telephone, by fax, by mail and bequests – all free.

It has been Community Business partnerships week and workshops with Our Community and the Department of Family and Community Services have been held all over Australia. The State winners for the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in community business partnership awards were announced as part of the workshops. You can see all the winners in the article below.

For those that didn't make the workshops, much of the information can be found on the Community Business Partnerships Brokerage Service operated by Our Community and can be found at www.ourcommunity.com.au/partnerships.

I am so excited about the partnerships that are being forged between small medium-sized businesses and local community groups with local government supporting the community and business partners. There are amazingly creative partnerships being forged and built on and the possibilities are endless – as long as all partners are aware of and acknowledge the advantages of the partnership and as long as the partnerships are relatively equal (after all this is as true for life partners as it is for community and business partners).

I hope everyone has a great month.

RHONDA GALBALLY AO
Chief Executive Officer

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2. Has your group charged GST when it didn't have to? If so, call the Tax Office NOW!

NON-PROFIT groups across the country are in negotiation with the Australian Tax Office and the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission to retrieve millions of dollars that was mistakenly collected in GST revenue as a result of an ATO bungle.

The ATO received millions of dollars after telling non-profit charitable organisations such as Royal shows, museums and zoos, that they were not entitled to tax exemptions from GST on ticket admissions.

The ruling saw organisers of a number of events, including the Perth Royal Show, charge GST on admissions in 2000, 2001 and 2002.

The ruling refusing tax exemptions was successfully challenged by Ernst and Young who advised that the groups didn't have to charge GST if the ticket price was less than 75 per cent of the cost per person of the event or activity it provided.

Organisers of the Perth Royal show which wrongly collected about \$300,000 in GST in 2000, 2001 and 2002 are in negotiations to retrieve the money and return it to patrons through lower ticket prices at this year's event.

The bungle has resulted in millions of dollars in GST being collected from visitors to events run by non-profit groups.

In a statement, the ATO said it was working closely with organisations that incorrectly included GST in their prices to assist them in returning it to the people actually paid it.

"Where the people who actually paid the GST can't be easily identified, we work with the the organisation to come up with a way to return the money to the community, for example, lower ticket prices."

The statement also said: "When we return overpaid GST to an organisation we have a responsibility to the rest of the community to ensure that the organisation does not profit from the refund, and that the benefits are passed on to the community as a whole."

The issue of how non-profit groups can actually "profit" from using the money to benefit their local communities aside, Our Community advises any group that thinks that they may have charged GST on their tickets and remitted it to the Tax Office when they didn't have to, to contact the ATO.

The ATO can be contacted on its non-profit hotline at **1300 130 248** or make sure you ask your accountant or auditor whether you paid money that could be returned to your local community.

For more information on the tax laws affecting non-profit groups you can visit the ATO's non-profit page at <http://www.ato.gov.au/nonprofit/>

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3. State & Territory winners of Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership Awards

The State and Territory winners in the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business partnerships were announced last week during a series of packed capital city seminars around the country.

The seminars, held as part of National Community Business Partnerships Week, saw hundreds of people attend to learn more about the process of putting together successful partnerships as well as the benefits for those involved as well as the general benefits for the local community.

(For those who missed the seminars there are still a number of seminars planned for Regional Australia. See below. OR for information on forming a partnership visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/partnerships)

The Federal Minister for Family and Community Services and the Deputy Chair of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, Dr Kay Patterson, paid tribute to the successful State and Territory award winners.

"These partnerships enable business and community sectors to achieve mutual goals, develop solutions to local and regional problems, and most important, they strengthen community ties," Senator Patterson said.

In presenting the Victorian winners, Dr Patterson said businesses gained greater credibility in the marketplace and many improved their bottom line as a result of being involved in community partnerships. She said another benefit for business was that their staff developed new skills and also experienced an increase in staff morale and pride from their involvement.

The partnerships who received awards during the week were:

MULTI-STATE

Large Business Award: Bakers Delight and Breast Cancer Network Australia for their national resource project, which will assist up to 6,000 women diagnosed with breast cancer over the next year.

Encouragement Award (Large Business): Insurance Australia Group and St John Ambulance Australia for their commitment to reducing risk and making Australian communities safer.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Medium Business: Australian Science Festival Ltd and ActewAGL for their 12 year partnership facilitating the annual staging of the popular Australian Science Festival and Canberra's Ideas and Innovation Festival (ICAN).

NEW SOUTH WALES

Small: Empower Australia and the University of Wollongong for its commitment to local community development with the establishment of a free online community web portal.

Medium: PMI Mortgage Insurance Ltd and Habitat for Humanity Australia Inc for its creation of more home ownership opportunities for low-income families.

Large: Greater Building Society and the Mayumbarri Trust for its successful operation of a healing centre providing a wide range of services to help survivors of child abuse.

Encouragement (Medium): Community First Credit Union and Chaos Television for its creation of a youth-focussed program, Hip Pocket, which is aimed at improving financial literacy at an early age.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Small: LoTech Aquaculture Pty Ltd, the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and Waruwi Community Corporation by joining together to produce new and culturally appropriate commercial activities in remote areas.

Medium: The Tiwi Forestry Project, which is a partnership between Sylvatech Ltd and the Tiwi Land Council, for a project that is a foundation for the development of a secure economic and social future for Tiwi people.

Large: partnership between the NT's Jawoyn community, the Fred Hollows Foundation and Woolworths Ltd, won the NT Large Business Award for the successful operation of Local Community Stores Program.

Encouragement (Small): Crocodylus Park (Wildlife Management International) and Charles Darwin University partnership.

Encouragement (Medium): Territory Construction Association and Northern Land Council partnership

QUEENSLAND

Small: Premium Ideas and Marketing Pty Ltd (Bayside Recruitment) with Bayside Adolescent Boarding Inc (BABI) for the support and guidance given to homeless or at-risk youths in the Wynnum/Redlands area.

Large: Bluescope Steel Lysaght, formerly known as BHP Steel, and the Endeavour Foundation for its 15-year-old scheme in which people with intellectual disabilities produce steel products for the building industry.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA:

Medium: Burns for Blinds and Youth Opportunities Association for its work in improving the lives of disengaged and disadvantaged youth.

Large: Electrolux Home Products Pty Ltd (Services and Spare Parts) and Phoenix Society Incorporated for providing training and job opportunities for people with disabilities.

Encouragement (Small Business): Libby Hogarth and Associates and Australian Refugee Association (ARA) Inc have given migration assistance to 1500 people in the past three years.

Encouragement (Medium Business): Fisher Jeffries and Helpmann Academy partnership in the Medium Business category. has supported young and emerging artists and helped launch many artists into successful professional careers.

TASMANIA

Medium: Collex Pty Ltd and Oak Enterprises (Walkabout Industries) for operating waste paper collections and shredding services for the past 10 years.

VICTORIA:

Medium: Regional Publishers (Western Victoria) Pty Ltd and Ballarat City Council with Best Community Development and the Ballarat Foundation and other partners for coordinating the building of one house and

restoration of another which were sold and
and the profits given to The Courier Charity Fund for distribution to community groups.

Large: ANZ Banking Group Ltd and the Brotherhood of St Laurence for its development of Australia's first matched savings program.

Encouragement (small): Beaton Consulting and Wellmark with Extended Families Australia for a successful rebranding and promotional strategy, which has provided more opportunities for children with disabilities and their families to develop loving and caring *grandparent* relationships with mature-aged volunteers.

Encouragement (Medium): Edison Mission Energy Holdings Pty Ltd, Landcare Australia, Greening Australia, Wellington Shire Council and other partners for their work with land, water and coastal rehabilitation which has included the planting of nearly 500,000 trees, shrubs and other types of vegetation.

Encouragement (Large): Transfield Services (Australia) and Central Ranges Local Learning and Employment Network won a Large Business Encouragement Award for their Puckapunyal and Districts Community Partnership Program, which has addressed critical local issues including infrastructure, youth migration and skills training for young people.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

Small: Virtual Cancer Centre.Com Pty Ltd and the Silver Chain Nursing Association Inc for their development of an online system designed to improve communications between health professionals relating to patient care.

Medium: Jacobs Sverdrup Australia and South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council and other partners for the successful development of an economic development strategy and a set of 'nation building' plans for the Noongar people of South West Australia.

Large: Freehills and Sussex Street Community Law Service for their 12-year-old partnership providing access to legal services for socially disadvantaged members of the community.

Encouragement (Medium Business): MODAL and the Western Australian Council of Social Service Inc (WACOSS for running the Community Management and Leadership Program in 2003.

Upcoming Regional Community Business Partnership seminars.

Registrations are still open for the remaining 11 Regional Seminars:

- **4 August:** Dubbo - Dubbo City Council
- **17 August:** Wollongong - Wollongong City Council
- **19 August:** Newcastle - Newcastle City Council
- **25 August:** Gold Coast - Gold Coast City Council
- **26 August:** Shepparton - City of Greater Shepparton
- **1 September:** Mount Gambier - The City Of Mount Gambier
- **9 September:** Merredin - Wheatbelt ACC
- **14 September:** Cairns - Cairns City Council
- **15 September:** Rockhampton - Rockhampton City Council

For further information or to register for a seminar, contact Lidia Milevski on (03) 9320 6807 or lidiam@ourcommunity.com.au.

And don't forget to sign up your group or business through the Community Business Partnership Brokerage service.



If you are a community organisation or business looking to get involved in a community business partnership then make sure you list through the matching service at www.ourcommunity.com.au/partnerships.

All organisations listed through the matching service will soon receive the first edition of the regular update, providing details on the latest additional resources, some case studies and other information to assist you in establishing community partnerships.

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4. Hundreds of Our Community members win funding for volunteers. Did your group?

Congratulations to the hundreds of members of Our Community who accessed funding through the Federal Government's Volunteer Small Equipment Grants.

We were the first to tell our members of the second round of funding and all subscribers to the **EasyGrants newsletter** had early warning of more funding available through the program. It pays to be a subscriber!

Over 3400 organisations involving volunteers received Volunteer Small Equipment Grants totalling \$7 million in the latest round of funding which provided up to \$5000, according to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Larry Anthony.

Mr Anthony said the latest round funding of \$7 million had been allocated to help Australia's volunteers carry on with their vital work and that the grants aim to encourage and support volunteers by enabling organisations to purchase equipment that contributes to making volunteering activities easier, safer and/or more enjoyable.

"Volunteers make an immense contribution to our society by giving up their valuable time to help others and their own communities. The Australian Government is committed to supporting the work that they do. This is the sixth time financial support has been committed to directly support volunteers since 2001, bringing the total funding to over \$26 million, helping over 11,500 community organisations," Mr Anthony said.

A list of successful organisations from Volunteer Small Equipment Grants 2004 – Round 2 is provided below. If you didn't apply for funding it is worth looking to see which groups like yours did. There's always next year.

- **Australian Capital Territory**
- **New South Wales**
- **Northern Territory**
- **Queensland**
- **South Australia**
- **Tasmania**
- **Victoria**
- **Western Australia**

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5. Do you have conflict in your organisation? Find the resources you need to solve it.

Community groups are powered by passionate people – people who often have firm views that they strongly believe in and are prepared to air and to advocate. And that passion can often lead to conflict within a group.

Conflict is not a bad thing and few groups operate without some level of healthy conflict, debate or disagreement over policy, procedure or direction. Some of the great changes to the community sector at local, national and international level have come about only because of a passionate debate between people of conflicting views who have then been able to find a way forward.

What you don't want is for that conflict to debilitate your organisation or to take the focus from the mission at hand and instead focus on internal or external politics. Unresolved conflict can leech all the energy out of an organisation and result in a drop-off in enthusiasm and active members.

One of the questions that often comes into Our Community is about dealing with conflict either at Board level or with opposing factions within an organisation.

As part of an ongoing search to bring community organisations the best possible resources in dealing with any challenges, we have found a treasure trove of free resources to assist groups in dealing with conflict.

The free resources are available to be downloaded for free from the Conflict Resolution Network which can be found at **<http://www.crnhq.org/>**.

We applaud the Conflict Resolution Network for making so many terrific resources available and suggest you visit the site, particularly to download the 12-skills Conflict Resolution Kit.

The 12 skills with the direct links to the pages on <http://www.crnhq.org/> are:

[The Win/Win Approach](#)

[The Creative Response](#)

[Empathy](#)

[Appropriate Assertiveness](#)

[Co-operative Power](#)

[Managing Emotions](#)

[Willingness to Resolve](#)

[Mapping the Conflict](#)

[Development of Options,](#)

[Negotiation Skills](#)

[Third Party Mediation](#)

[Broadening Perspectives](#)

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6. Our Community Leaders – Great Australian Leaders in Focus: Prof. Allan Fels.

Professor Allan Fels AO is the subject of this month's *Great Australian Leaders in Focus* segment, a series which features the thoughts of some of Australia's best-known community leaders.

He joins the list of leaders we have already interviewed including **Ian Kiernan, Sir Gustav Nossal, Professor Fiona Stanley, Peter Garrett, John Eales, Stephanie Alexander** and **Molly Harriss Olson**.

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

But first to Professor Allan Fels AO, the former chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission from 1995 until 2003, who was appointed Dean of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government in July 2003.

Prior to his role as Chair of the ACCC he was Chairman of the former Trade Practices Commission from 1991 until 1995 and Chairman of the Prices Surveillance Authority from 1989 until 1992.

Professor Fels was appointed as Professor of Administration at Monash University in 1984 and was the Director of the Graduate School of Management, Monash University from 1985 until 1990. He is now an Honorary Professor in the Faculty of Business and Economics at Monash University and became a Professorial Fellow in the Department of Political Science at the University of Melbourne in 2003. He was awarded the Order of Australia in June 2001.

In more recent times Professor Fels has taken a prominent role in pushing for more resources for mental health.

We began by asking who Professor Fels considered to be the three great leaders of our time? And Why?

Professor Allan Fels:

- Nelson Mandela - for his life long crusade for justice for South Africa.
- UN Secretary General - Kofi Annan for universal leadership.
- Mother Teresa – for care for the poor.

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

Professor Allan Fels:

- A clear vision of a useful goal;
- An ability to communicate internally and externally;
- An ability to work with other people.

And, above all, a willingness to take on a difficult problem and not assume the solution is "leadership" by one person.

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

Professor Allan Fels:

I shall limit myself to leadership in the public sector. The barriers are:

1. the lack of independence like there used to be in the past
2. the relative unattractiveness of public sector pay

3. the sheer difficulty of defining objectives clearly in the public service where much legislation is ambiguous

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

Professor Allan Fels:

Recognise that leadership is not handing down tablets from above. A hard problem often requires profound shifts in community attitudes and behaviour with no profound focus on a single leader.

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

Professor Allan Fels:

Leaders are able to be bred.

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

Professor Allan Fels:

1. Handling defence and security issues.
2. Macroeconomic management.
3. Microeconomic reform especially water.

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

Professor Allan Fels:

I have learnt that you need a worthwhile cause, to know the subject well and then to articulate it.

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

Professor Allan Fels:

My approach has not been to focus on a single person. I have gone out of my way to travel very widely throughout the world, to meet and mix with many different people and to take a bit from each. Also I don't strongly believe in leaders who are necessarily imbued with a clear simple vision. Some problems are very complex, not solvable by one person's vision, and needing a team approach, and an approach which affects many people's behaviour. My intellectual hero in this regard is Ron Heifetz, of Harvard's Kennedy School, for example in his *Leadership Without Easy Answers*.

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7. Our Community Founder Rhonda Galbally releases her book *Just Passions*.

How did Our Community start? It is a common question on how the www.ourcommunity.com.au website came into being.

For those seeking answers, the reality is that much of the impetus came from the 30-plus years that our founding CEO Rhonda Galbally spent building and supporting grassroots organisations and movements and being at the forefront of advocating for the rights of people with disability, women, indigenous and ethnic groups and also pushing for the rights of self-help groups.

That history has been transformed into a book, *Just Passions – The personal is political* which is being published by Pluto Press and will be officially launched in Melbourne next week by former Australian of the Year, Sir Gustav Nossal.

The book provides a fresh insight into the major liberation struggles of the 70's and onwards: disability rights, women's rights, the struggles for education and health reforms amongst others.

Rhonda reflects on her own experiences in a number of incredibly changing areas including technology, work, family, ageing, disability, women, social capital, lifestyles and charity. Rhonda's story is a fascinating study of an Australian woman who struggles to overcome prejudice and discrimination to seize opportunities at critical moments to creatively shape her life - and help shape the lives of others.

The book is available at bookstores or can be ordered through Our Community for \$35.95 (including GST and postage and handling). An order form is at www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/justpassionsorderform.pdf. All royalties from this book are being donated by Rhonda to [ORYGEN Research Centre](#) in support of youth mental health.

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8. Improve your website. Use these checklists to deliver an effective online presence

A great number of community organisations now operate their own website.

Whether a professionally built “bells and whistles” site or something that volunteers have created or provide your group with a basic online presence, a website is increasingly becoming an important part of both doing business and getting the message out there in your community.

Many groups spend a great deal of money but still end up with a site that might look great but fails to provide the basic needs that online visitors are looking for or are confusing.

What many people want is a checklist before they start or before they review a redevelopment of the site so they can ensure their information technology consultants deliver a good, functional site.

There are some very good checklists available that have been put together by the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO - formerly known as the NOIE, the National Office for the Information Economy).

While these checklists have been developed for use by Government agencies and departments, they do provide hundreds of pointers that can be of use – and of interest – to local community organisations. The scale might be different but many of the fundamentals remain the same.

There are 20 such checklists that cover topics such as content management, using online forms, website navigation, access and equity and much more. While many of the topics at first look of little relevance to community groups, many of the steps in the checklists are useful.

You can find the checklists on the AGIMO site at <http://www.agimo.gov.au/practice/delivery/checklists>.

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9. Victorian Government seeks your feedback on Review of Fundraising legislation.

The Victorian Government is seeking submissions from community organisations and groups involved in fundraising after the release of their discussion paper into the Review of the Fundraising Appeals Act 1998.

In releasing the discussion paper, the Consumer Affairs Minister, Mr John Lenders, said fundraising was often at the heart of a strong community and is a proven way of delivering valuable community assets and services.

“Since February this year, the Member for Narre Warren North, Luke Donnellan, has been talking to organisations and individuals on my behalf about the way fundraising is currently regulated,” Mr Lenders said.

“We want to ensure Victorians have faith in the fundraising industry to which they give approximately \$1.2 billion each year.

“From those discussions and meetings, it is clear that some issues need to be worked through more thoroughly and with the benefit of more input from the community.”

Preliminary discussions raised six main issues:

1. Is the meaning of the term ‘fundraising appeal’ clear?
2. How is the current system, specifically the registration process, working?
3. How does the current registration process sit with other reporting requirements imposed on fundraisers?
4. How can transparency and public confidence in fundraising be increased?
5. What role could/should a code of practice play in the industry?
6. Should national harmonisation be a critical priority and what steps could be taken to promote it?

“The Government is taking an open and flexible approach to the review and is encouraging a broad range of responses to help shape any legislative change.” Mr Lenders said. “To help guide stakeholders and interested parties who wish to respond to the review specific terms of reference have been set.”

The terms of reference are:

1. Opportunities for national harmonisation.

2. Objectives and coverage of the Fundraising Appeals Act 1998 and whether the term 'fundraising appeal' requires clarification.
3. The effectiveness of the registration process and whether it achieves the required balance between protecting the public and minimising the administrative burden on fundraising organisations.
4. The accountability provisions within the Act and whether they should be made more robust to ensure greater transparency.
5. The appropriateness of specifying a proportion of proceeds that should be passed on to the nominated beneficiary, or specifying what is a reasonable amount to be retained by an organisation for their operational costs.
6. The appropriateness of the nature and extent of current exemptions from the operation of the Act.
7. The consistency of the Act's reporting requirements with reporting requirements contained in other Victorian legislation.
8. The potential of a code of practice for fundraisers as a means of promoting best practice within the industry.

Mr Donnellan said community-based and charitable organisations are encouraged to respond to this invitation to comment.

"It is important we strike the right mix of checks and balances to achieve transparency and confidence in the industry. We don't want to impose onerous paper work requirements on small organisations run by the goodwill of volunteers."

Copies of the Discussion paper can be downloaded at www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/Fundraising_Appeal_Act_Review.pdf

Submissions should be forwarded to fundraisingsubmissions@justice.vic.gov.au or Review of the Fundraising Appeals Act 1998, Consumer Affairs Victoria, GPO Box 123A, Melbourne, VIC 3001.

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10. People becoming more active in the community – British study finds.

While it has been a while since the last ABS measure of the level of volunteering (which was on the increase), a new study out of Britain shows that more people are taking an active role in their community.

The Active Communities report, based on the 2003 British Home Office citizenship survey, shows more than half of those polled were actively engaged in the community at least once a month in 2003. It found there was a rise in the number of people involved in formal volunteering, a large rise in those involved in "informal" volunteering such as helping neighbours and friends.

The report found that in 2003 more than 51 per cent of the population aged over 16 was engaged in active community participation (civic participation, formal or informal volunteering) at least once a month in the 12 months prior to interview. That figure was up significantly from the 2001 result of 48 per cent. If extrapolated across the country an extra 1.5 million people were engaged in community participation in 2003 compared to 2001.

The British government definition of community participation takes in organised formal volunteering and "informal volunteering" - helping people who are not part of the family with babysitting, shopping, giving advice, cat-sitting, offering transport or keeping in touch with housebound neighbours.

The definition also includes civic involvement, ranging from contacting MPs and council officials to signing petitions or going on protest demonstrations. The increase in community participation is largely driven by a rise in informal volunteering, the report says. The number of people volunteering informally at least once a month "rose significantly" from 34% in 2001 - an estimated 13.5 million people across England - to 37% in 2003, an estimated 14.9 million people.

But the report cautioned that the proportion of people involved at least once a year had gone down. "It may well be the case that the increase in informal volunteering is a case of the same people doing more rather than more people getting involved." Formal volunteering figures have stayed static, with 28% of the survey - an estimated 11.1 million people nationwide - saying they were involved once a month in 2003, about the same as in 2001.

The report estimates that the value of formal and informal volunteering arrangements rose sharply, contributing £42.6bn in 2003, compared with £34.3bn in 2001.

It also shows a distinct shift to a more politically active type of civic engagement. The figures show a huge increase in the number of people signing petitions, up from 43% to 60% between 2001 and 2003, while the number of people taking part in demonstrations or protests more than doubled from 9% to 22% in the same period - a finding that is likely to reflect the massive movement against the war on Iraq.

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11. Community Briefs

Have you got IBM employees involved in your group?

From time to time we mention about corporate programs that are available to employees. One such example is the **Telstra Kids Fund** where employees can apply for funding for groups that their children/grandchildren are members of.

Well here's another one. It's worth asking all your membership if they happen to work for IBM or if they have retired from working for the worldwide IT company. If they do, then now is the time to get them involved in volunteering because it could mean money for your community group.

Through the **IBM On Demand Community Program**, schools and not for profit organisations can benefit through the donation of IBM technology and cash grants as part of the Community Grants program.

When individuals or teams of IBM employees or retirees volunteer for at least 40 hours over a 5 month consecutive period with an average of 8 hours per month, the organisation may be eligible for a Community Grant. Depending on the nature of volunteerism and the number of IBM volunteers, the grant amounts are \$1600 for a cash grant or for an IBM technology grant they range from \$3500 to \$12000 for technology grants.

Schools and not for profit organisations not only benefit from the expertise of IBM volunteers but also from the innovative technology.

Maybe next time you send a membership renewal out you could ask your members if they have a workplace giving scheme that your group could apply for? It can't hurt.

The Communities in Control video.

We have almost sold out the first order of videos from the Communities in Control conference but are re-ordering another batch.

If you missed the conference and are keen on seeing the presentations, from keynote speakers including Sir David Henshaw, Shelley Martin, John Thwaites, Peter Costello, Clive Hamilton, Richard Eckersley, Phillip Adams, Mike Pratt and the Hypothetical hosted by Simon Longstaff then you can order the video by clicking on www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/cic_video_order2004.pdf.

The speeches are also all available free online at http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/control/control_article.jsp?articleId=1073.

Free websites for South Australian groups.

For all our South Australian groups looking for assistance in getting a website (after being motivated by the earlier article) should visit the Community Website Project at [**www.communitywebs.org**](http://www.communitywebs.org) which is a joint initiative of the **Office for Volunteers** and the **School of Communication, Information and New Media** at the **University of South Australia** (Magill campus).

The project aims to give volunteer organisations the opportunity to have a website designed and incorporated onto a host site on the Internet free of charge. It will also help to build relationships between young people and the volunteer sector. Students completing a 'Multimedia Project' at the University of South Australia are linked to community based volunteer groups which do not currently have a website.

Each volunteer group that registers for and is accepted into the project will be matched to a student enrolled in 'Multimedia Project'. The student will then work with the group over a number of weeks, designing a website according to the group's needs. There will be no charge to volunteer groups for this service.

To register your group for the Community Website Project, **click here**

Keeping the computers for community group theme going.

WorkVentures Connect IT has found a way to bring affordable computers (\$280) to not-for-profit organisations and schools that once believed they would never afford a personal computer (PC).

Companies like Westpac donate the hardware and Microsoft donates licensed software so that you can purchase a useful, high quality recycled computer at a price you can afford.

WorkVentures is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to build a just, creative and sustainable society by providing quality employment, economic and community development services, giving special priority to unemployed and disadvantaged people.

Every WorkVentures Connect IT refurbished computer comes with a three month warranty and is capable of running Microsoft software and other mainstream applications, and browsing the Internet, just like many new PCs.

The \$280 offer includes: Pentium II 300Mhz (min), 128MB RAM, CD ROM, 4GB HDD (min), Software – WIN98SE, AVG Antivirus, Open Office suite, 15" monitor, New keyboard and mouse, 10/100 Network Card and three month warranty.

For more information call toll free on 1800 112205 or order online at <http://www.workventures.com.au/connectit>

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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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