

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

September 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.com.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)

It's something about spring that for me always signals enormous activity, and September has been a month of visits to many parts of Australia, some of them, like beautiful Mount Gambier, are places that I have never been to before.

In all of these visits the most exciting thing is to meet the grass roots innovators, activists and community heroes (gender neutral) undertaking cutting edge work. In all of these places I find colleagues in local government, in community groups and in local businesses – all working together, creating partnerships and approaches that work for their local communities and the individuals in them.

Then there are the mutual support networks that have such an enormous impact. An example of a network that I met with this month is the Victorian Compassionate Friends and am very proud to have been invited to become the patron of this great network - of mutual support groups whose membership comprises parents whose children have died.

Compassionate Friends started well over 25 years ago and is a network of local community groups where members provide support for each other over the loss and grief from the death of a child. The groups are a saviour for parents because they provide support from people who have had the same experience and gone through the grief. It is not about professional counselling, which while at times might be necessary and very helpful, can never can replace the mutual support provided by these groups.

From a different perspective, another sensational community/business network I met in September was West Australia's Telecentres (<http://www.telecentres.wa.gov.au/home/>). Telecentres are a great West Australian secret (although I believe that this model has now been transferred to New South Wales and Tasmania) and are in some ways like 21st century versions of neighbourhood houses, adult learning centres, community and business resource centres – all in one. They provide information communication technology hubs to local, remote and also to indigenous communities right across the length and breadth of Western Australia. As well as providing access to technology – software, hardware, video conferencing and broadband technology, they also provide all of the functions of neighbourhood houses and adult learning centres. (contact is Brett Sabien, Manager Western Australia's Telecentres Program - contact 08 92171449)

They are also busy delivering a wide range of government services. At their annual conference it was not at all surprising to me to meet my old friend Mal Bryce ex Deputy Premier and Minister for innovation and technology, now the Chair of this innovative Telecentres program. Mal is an Australian leader in nourishing great ideas and new solutions – especially in the ITC field. The regional Telecentres have been so successful that they have even negotiated for the Federal Government's Rural Transaction Centres operates out of Telecentres – hence the federal funding building on and building up an already successful model instead of reinventing the wheel.

And yet another great innovation from our West Australian friends is their regional collocation fund – the first step is to bring together government and community groups and services. This fund encourages communities to live together and ultimately this makes possible the capacity to share back office functions such as payroll, IT and financial services. Of course Telecentres are core to such collocations as they can provide the back office functions for other community groups. While many States are investigating the value of community service delivery collocation, there is also great value for participative community groups to collocate.

Add to that the great rap I heard for Australia's best practice granting model for lottery funds - West Australia's Lotterywest. (See edition 1 Best practice in Grantmaking)
www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au/asp/index.asp?pgid=193.

This is the best model I have seen in Australia for the disbursement of lottery fund grants to community groups. It is beloved across the entire State and groups can easily, quickly and unbureacratically access grants, for a wide range of their needs. Every time I go to the west, I come back highly stimulated, with great ideas.

RHONDA GALBALLY AO
Chief Executive Officer

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2. How are social movements created? Lessons on building momentum.

Whether it's advocating to get a new community facility built, improve access for people with disability, find funding for projects or force policy change on issues ranging from treatment of refugees to the state of sporting fields, local community groups are always looking for the secret to building support and momentum.

So how do community groups or social movements gather strength? This article, which appeared in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, attempts to isolate some of the elements needed to create, increase and sustain momentum.

Whether your group is a small, regional organisation lobbying for support or a national group representing thousands of members, there are some strong points that are of use. As this article points out it is important to take the lessons from the big movements and adapt the opportunities, tactics and strategies that are relevant to your own situation.

"Social innovators need to know not only how social movements work; they need to think about how social movements can be created and how the strategies and tactics we see used by the larger social movements - such as the environmental movement - might be applied in more limited contexts. Leaders of nonprofits and foundations can create coalitions and networks to build the momentum necessary for social change. Here are some thoughts to get started:

1. Movements need more than goodwill or individuals who identify with the movement and its objectives. If the movement is to endure, it needs staff or committed activists to coordinate activities, maintain records, and plan events and programs.
2. In the early stages, non-profit leaders may need to dedicate resources - including staff, professional help, or volunteers normally committed to other activities - to kick-start a movement. Staff can "piggyback," striking a balance with their other responsibilities.
3. Mobilising skills can be taught. Programs like the Industrial Areas Foundation, founded in Chicago by noted community organiser Saul Alinsky, teach community activists the skills needed to mobilise members of the community and develop programs. Their techniques can be adapted for various populations and purposes.
4. Mass events (relative to the movement's base), such as Earth Day, are useful for several purposes. They signal to those who are outside the movement, both the broader public and policymakers, that there is a lot of concern about the issues raised. They also signal to adherents that they are not alone, that there are many others who share their concerns.
5. Dramatic events, such as the Santa Barbara oil spill in 1969, can be used to draw attention to the movement even if large numbers of people are not involved. Dramatic events capture attention in a way that abstract claims or quantitative data on issues do not. Dramatic events can be picked up by the mass media or used in more targeted communications to draw attention to movement issues.
6. Social movements do not need agreed-upon solutions or policy directives. As long as groups share a general sense of problem or direction of change, a group can develop a common identity and purpose.
7. Many movements are polycephalic (multiple-headed) - different factions and organisations have different leaders. Indeed, some may refuse to anoint leaders at all. It is true that one or two leaders may end up as seeming to speak for the movement. But except in command and control movements (those under extreme attack), a large number of voices may be raised behind the scenes.

Social movements and mobilised populations are endemic to modern society. Innovators need to be aware of the processes behind them, and be prepared to use movements to advance their interests - Mayer N. Zald."

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3. Has your group started preparing for Christmas? Now's the time to think about it.

While Christmas still seems a long way away, the reality is that it is only about eight weeks to the start of December and the festive season kicks in.

Now is a good time to question how prepared your organisation is for Christmas. Has your group thought about Christmas and whether you want to use the festive season as an opportunity to raise funds? Or awareness?

Here are some ideas to get you thinking on preparing for Christmas (if you haven't already):

1. Have you spoken to your business partners and sponsors about the way they may be able to support your organisation at Christmas time. They could advertise your special events, initiate a staff party to help fundraise for you or make a donation to your group instead of buying cards for their clients or customers.
2. Have you developed a Christmas fundraising appeal for your supporters, highlighting a suitable project, activity or objective and creating a campaign that explains the need for support? Have you offered people the opportunity to donate in person, by cheque, over the phone or online? (If you haven't got an online facility visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/donations or email Amy Johannsohn at amyj@ourcommunity.com.au for a full information pack for Our Community's free online donations service).
3. Have you organised a Christmas special event or fundraiser? It is a crowded market but many groups have a Christmas get-together or event to finish the year and it is worth considering if you can leverage the event to fundraise for the group.
4. Have you looked at other events happening in the area and looked at ways that you might be able to add value or add your request for help or set up a stall that raises funds or awareness?
5. Is there any merchandise (t-shirts, wine, glasses, pens, tea-towels, stickers etc) that you have left over from other fundraisers or functions that could be discounted and offered to members, supporters or the general public as a special Christmas offer?
6. Have you developed a wishlist of what your organisation needs for the next year (could range from office furniture to sporting equipment, probono support or goods your clients need) to send to your supporters? Have you listed the copy of the list on your website so new visitors get an idea of how they can help out or provide the goods/services you need?
7. Have you started to get in order your membership, donor and sponsor database so you can send a letter thanking them for their support in 2004 and reminding them of what your group has achieved with their support?
8. Have you offered people the option of buying a membership or making a donation to your group as a gift that they can give someone else for Christmas?

These are just a few ideas to get your group started and to stimulate thinking about Christmas and what community groups can do at this time of year.

We are running a full list of ideas and suggestions in the October edition of Raising Funds newsletter, Australia's most practical and best-value fundraising newsletter. If you aren't already among the thousands of current subscribers to Raising Funds, email Samantha Fritz at samanthaf@ourcommunity.com.au, visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/raisingfunds or call (03) 9320 6807.

Christmas – Are you selling Christmas Cards this year?

Already this month we have had a number of letters from groups who are selling Christmas cards to raise funds for their organisation.

We will be listing all the organisations that are selling Christmas cards to the general public or to business and listing them under a separate button on the Australian Giving Centre (supported by Westpac Bank) at www.ourcommunity.com.au/donations.

If your organisation is selling cards let us know and we will list your group and link through to your website so visitors to the Our Community site can find a group that they would like to support this year.

Copy and Paste the following information, fill it in and send it by email to Brian Walsh at brianw@ourcommunity.com.au.

- **Organisation:**
- **How to order cards:**
- **Website:**
- **Email:**
- **Phone:**
- **Shop:**

- **Any other information:**

It will be just another feature of the Australian Giving Centre which also provides information and options for people to donate money, time, blood, computers, clothes and furniture, organs and mobile phones. (See Section 10 for more information on the rate of donations to the site)

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4. Volunteering 'boosts community happiness'

Why should people get involved and volunteer in their local community?

Well a new British study has found that voluntary work may hold the key to happiness which builds on the already solid evidence about the health and welfare benefits of involvement in community.

This won't come as any great shock to people involved in communities where the level of voluntary work and volunteerism is high but the British study which surveyed 101 randomly-selected district authorities and volunteer projects found that those with the best quality of life had high levels of informal voluntary activity.

People living in areas where many citizens gave up their time for others enjoyed better health, suffered less crime, and claimed to be "very satisfied" with their lives. Students from these communities also achieved higher grades at school.

Professor Paul Whiteley, from the University of Essex in Colchester, whose team produced the findings, said the research had revealed an interesting link between helping others and enjoying a good quality of life.

"It seems that when we focus on the needs of others, we may also reap benefits ourselves. It means that voluntary activity in the community is associated with better health, lower crime, improved educational performance and greater life satisfaction," he told Society Guardian.

Volunteering had a positive influence irrespective of a community's social class or wealth, the Economic and Social Research Council study found. The areas that recorded the highest percentage of people who said they were "very satisfied with life" were also the areas that enjoyed high levels of voluntary activity.

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5. Majority of Australian households now have the Internet – are you catering for them?

The need for all community groups to use new technology to raise support, awareness, donations and membership continues to grow.

A great number of community organisations regularly use email to communicate with stakeholders and an increasing number are now setting up websites (even very basic or free ones – see next article) to ensure that people looking for their services can find them.

If you want further evidence as to why it is so important to now have an Internet presence, then the latest report from the Australian Bureau of Statistics provides some strong proof. It shows the number of Australian households with access to the Internet continues to increase, with over half (53%) of households having access in 2003.

This figure has increased from 46% of households in the previous year, and 16% of households five years earlier so the growth is quite rapid.

Household access to a computer has also risen, with close to two-thirds (66%) of households having access in

2003. This is up from 61% of households in the previous year and 44% of households five years earlier.

Household access to the Internet varied across states and territories, from 66% of households in the Australian Capital Territory to 41% of households in Tasmania. For both New South Wales and Victoria the proportion of households with access to the Internet was 54%, followed by Western Australia (53%), Queensland (52%) and South Australia (48%). Northern Territory information is not available separately.

The publication also draws from a range of previous surveys to provide a snapshot of different community group's Internet and computer usage (media please note statistics on the following community groups are not directly comparable).

- Over one-third (39%) of people with a disability aged 15 years or over used the Internet and 48% used a computer in the 12 months prior to the survey, which was conducted from June to November 2003.
- Of older people living in private households aged 60 years or over 21% used the Internet, and 29% used a computer in the 12 months prior to the survey, which was conducted from June to November 2003.
- Almost two-thirds (64%) of children aged five to 14 years used the Internet, and 95% used a computer in the 12 months to April 2003.
- Of Indigenous people aged 15 years or over, 41% used the Internet and over half (56%) used a computer in the 12 months prior to the survey, which was conducted mainly from August to December 2002.

More detail on where these groups of people are likely to use computers and the Internet and the purposes for using computers or the Internet at home is available in [Household Use of Information Technology, Australia, 2002 and 2003](#) (cat. no. 8146.0).

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6. Want to get an online presence quickly – and for free?

In the last article we talked about why groups should be looking at setting up an Internet presence.

Here we provide some information on how groups can actually do it – for free. Subscribers to [Raising Funds](#) have already received this information but if your group hasn't checked out the online services you can get for free from My Connected Community (mc²), then maybe it is time to do so.

"Funded by the State Government of Victoria, [mc²](#) is primarily intended for use by community groups in Victoria, Australia, but anyone around the world is free to use it."

Other states do have their own schemes -- community groups in these states should check out these offers --

ACT: (<http://136.153.10.110/acr/acronline.nsf/>),

WA: (<http://multicultural.online.wa.gov.au/wppuser/owamc/about/faq.html>),

SA: (<http://www.communitywebs.org>)

And Brisbane-based groups: (<http://www.ourbrisbane.com/community/building/>)

But you'll still probably find that [mc²](#) offers more for less.

You get, among other things, 10 megabytes of web space (if you're an individual) or a whopping 50 meg (if you're a group) – enough for a very full website with all the bells and whistles, which they help you fill with a useful and helpful set of instructions, a comprehensive manual, templates, editing programs, and (if you're in Victoria) training sessions.

The amount you have to know about computers or the web or HTML or FTP or any of those complicated technical things has been reduced to the absolute minimum. The backup techno's done by Vicnet, and Vicnet's a reliable provider with a good help line.

[mc²](#) also offers a range of other services to community groups – chat groups, guestbooks, file sharing (very useful), polling, event listings, link pages, notice boards, photo albums, and discussion forums, all of them with simple procedures and full instructions.

All you need to get on is a link to the web – an ISP. This may still cost you money – but *only if you have no web access at all. If your partner, or your workplace, or your kids, will let you use their dialup for a few hours a week, or if you're willing to drop in to the local library, you're laughing.* Because the point is that with [mc²](#),

and just about with mc² only, the web space is not linked to the particular ISP account it's contacted from. One ISP account can be used to service five or ten or twenty mc² memberships.

Again, subscribers to Raising Funds have already had the benefit of this knowledge.

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7. Our Community Leaders – Great Australian Leaders in Focus: Justice Paul Stein.

Justice Paul Stein, retired justice of the NSW Court of Appeal 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, Molly Harriss Olson, Dr Jim Varghese** and **Professor Allan Fels**.

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.

Justice Stein was appointed a judge of the District Court in June 1983, became a judge of the Land and Environment Court in June 1985 and was appointed a judge and a judge of appeal of the NSW Supreme Court in April 1997. He retired in 2003. Previously he was Deputy Ombudsman in NSW between 1977 and 1979 and served as President of the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board between 1979 and 1982. He has also served on or chaired many committees of review and inquiries and also served as board member and Chair of the Australian Consumers Association (1974-86; a member of the NRMA Crime Safe Committee (1997-2000); and Chair of the NRMA Community Advisory Committee between (1993-98).

We started by asking Justice Paul Stein who he considered to be the three great leaders of our time? And Why?

Justice Paul Stein:

- Nelson Mandela and Xanana Gusmao; because of their immense courage and humanity, as well as retention of the power of forgiveness as a means of reconciliation.
- Simone de Beauvoir; for her leadership of women and their emancipation.

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

Justice Paul Stein:

- Integrity
- Communication
- Sensitivity

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

Justice Paul Stein:

- Conventional politics and spin doctoring
- Economic rationalism as an excuse for state and private capitalism
- Lethargy of general populace

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

Justice Paul Stein:

Have courage and don't sell out on principles. Always talk straight and do not 'spin'.

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

Justice Paul Stein:

A bit of both.

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

Justice Paul Stein:

- Lies by politicians
- The nature of politics itself
- Partly because of the above, a public which tunes out of national issues and debate.

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

Justice Paul Stein:

Don't underestimate the barriers and difficulties, but don't give up.

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

Justice Paul Stein:

- **John Yap**; a Chinese/Indonesian lawyer I knew in the 60s and 70s, who was brave beyond belief in defending human rights in Indonesia.
- **Edward St John QC**; who taught me the art of straight talking and of the need for hard work to articulate and advocate points of view.

Both taught me the need for courage to defend unpopular causes and human rights.

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8. Tax Deductible Donations Increase by Less than 4%.

The latest Tax Office Statistics have confirmed a 10 year trend in increased claims of tax deductions for donations to charities and other public funds, according to the latest Givewell study.

The study of the 2001-02 figures, released in July, found the average annual value of gifts claimed fell slightly (by an average of \$4) and the value of claims grew at a much lower rate than in previous years.

Claims of \$868m were made in 2001-02: an increase of \$30m (less than 4 per cent) on the previous year. Over 3.6 million taxpayers made claims which represented 35 per cent of total individual taxpayers.

We have reprinted the 10-year table produced by Givewell.

Tax Office Statistics on Gifts by Individuals

Year:	<u>92-93</u>	<u>93-94</u>	<u>94-95</u>	<u>95-96</u>	<u>96-97</u>	<u>97-98</u>	<u>98-99</u>	<u>99-00</u>	<u>00-01</u>	<u>01-02</u>
Gifts claimed	\$439m	\$471m	\$495m	\$528m	\$541m	\$581m	\$632m	\$721m	\$838m	\$868m
% Change		7.3%	5.1%	6.7%	2.5%	7.4%	8.8%	12.3%	14%	3.6%
Taxpayers claiming deductions	3.13m	3.16m	3.17m	3.20m	3.15m	3.2m	3.3m	3.41m	3.45m	3.6m
Average annual value of gifts or donations	\$140	\$149	\$156	\$165	\$171	\$182	\$192	\$211	\$243	\$239
Total individual taxpayers	9.27m	9.39m	9.62m	9.85m	9.86m	9.79m	9.74m	10.14m	10.27m	10.28m

The proportion of taxpayers claiming tax deductions for gifts to charity has hovered at around 1/3 of taxpayers lodging returns for many years although previous research has estimated that two thirds of individual donations were not claimed as tax deductions and that around 5.2 million people made donations without claiming a deduction in their income tax return.

Given that people can only claim deductions for donations to 19,000 out of the 700,000 community groups in Australia it is not surprising that most are not claimed and ensures the Tax Office figures are a guide but are not representative of giving generally.

The main difference from previous years is that, for the first time in 10 years of studying the figures, Givewell found that the average annual value of the gifts or donations claimed as a tax deduction by each individual dropped (by 2 per cent - from \$243 to \$239).

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9. Women answer the call for information on joining Boards and committees.

Dozens of Victorian women have rolled up to take part in a series of free seminars to find out why and how they can contribute more to their community by joining a Committee or Board.

Highly successful seminars have already been held in Ouyen and Wodonga and the CBD seminar, to be held on October 14, is already fully subscribed.

However, with another nine seminars still scheduled to take place over the next couple of months, including another two in the Melbourne metropolitan area, there are still plenty of chances to take part.

The Women on Board seminars are being run by the Office of Women's Policy (part of the Department for Victorian Communities) and Our Community and are designed to inspire women and provide them with the skills and confidence to serve on Boards and Committees.

Participants receive a collection of 20 help sheets, which are designed to guide them from the initial stages of getting on a Board, through the responsibilities and challenges they will face during their service and beyond.

Future seminars include:

• Shepparton	October 12	11am – 1pm
• Melbourne CBD	October 14	FULLY SUBSCRIBED
• Warragul	October 21	1pm – 3pm
• Bairnsdale	October 27	7pm – 9pm
• Ballarat	November 3	1pm – 3pm
• Hamilton	November 3	7pm – 9pm
• Horsham	November 4	1pm – 3pm
• Werribee	November 10	2.30pm – 4.30pm
• Bendigo	November 18	3pm – 5pm
• Craigieburn	November 24	2 pm – 4pm

The seminars are free but registrations are essential as places are limited.

Women can register online at www.ourcommunity.com.au/wob or for more information call Kathy Richardson on (03) 9320 6815 or email kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au.

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10. Community Briefs.

Giving continues to rise

Earlier in the newsletter we talked about the Tax Office's giving statistics – well while they showed modest growth, donations to the Australian Giving Centre (www.ourcommunity.com.au/donations) continues to grow at a strong rate.

We now have more than 420 separate appeals listed on the site to receive donations – double the number for the same time last year.

The amount of money donated to appeals listed on the site is also tracking at well over double the amount given in the September quarter of 2003 and the range of groups that are receiving donations is also expanding.

After a total of \$128,000 was raised in the month of June – the biggest single month on record since the free service opened in 2001 – donations have continued to flood in with record months also recorded in July, August and September.

We are encouraging those groups that have an online donations facility with the [Australian Giving Centre](#) or are keen to set one up to contact Amy Johannsohn at amyj@ourcommunity.com.au or call (03) 9320 2806. Amy has a short list of key ideas to promote more traffic through your online donations address.

Green conference for local councils

Many local councils that are subscribers to this newsletter are now developing policies on how they can buy green and encourage local businesses and groups to do the same.

The Department of Environment and Conservation NSW is hosting a conference and exhibition which aims to show how purchasing environmentally preferred products are good for the environment, good for health, good for businesses and good for the economy.

The conference and exhibition will be held at Telstra Stadium, Sydney Olympic Park from Wednesday 10 to Friday 12 November, 2004 . For more information on the list of national and international experts visit the conference website at <http://www.impactenviro.com.au/buyinggreen2004>

The Communities in Control video.

Those groups who had ordered a copy of the Communities in Control video, should have received theirs in the mail in past fortnight and we still have a few video twin-packs remaining for those who didn't get a chance to get to the conference or who did and want to show others in their local community.

To order the video featuring 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 transcripts of speeches are also all available free online at http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/control/control_article.jsp?articleId=1073.

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11. 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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