

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

Welcome to the latest edition of Our Community Matters newsletter.

There are a number of new initiatives that we will be unveiling over the next few weeks – it seems that no sooner has one thing been bedded down than our groups come up with new ideas and new directions in which to take us.

One of the things that does concern me, particularly in dealing with regional groups, is the feeling that the increased petrol prices might have middle to longer term impact on community groups as well as the initial impact when we saw the prices rise to ridiculous levels last month.

I am not sure that there is much that can be done, given the international situation, but it's important that the voice of community is heard and people and politicians are aware of the way major issues in this country have an impact on the social economy as well as the financial economy.

We want to hear your examples.

Usually much of this newsletter is about providing information but in this newsletter we are also seeking information and we want to hear from groups about both their financial needs (visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/financesurvey) and their response to the **Marketing, Media and Post Centre** that we have built with Australia Post. There is a chance for groups to go into a draw for a refund of up to \$5000 on their direct marketing campaign, just by filling out the form and providing some feedback.

On the good news front, the latest research from the Giving Australia research shows that the amount of money both individuals and companies are providing community groups continues to grow and has jumped 88% - to \$5.7bill – since 1997.

That is good news for all groups and should be a reason to review your donations. If your donations haven't risen by the same level or more then your organisation is slipping behind. Now's a good time to review your strategy.

In other news we have taken up the constant suggestion of many groups that receive this newsletter and are starting up a regular community jobs bulletin to cover both the community, and education sectors – from kindergarten onwards. This has come up time and time again and we have eventually decided to accede to the wishes of our readers. We hope you use it.

And don't forget – it is almost no time to Christmas so if you haven't started planning your campaign, your events, and your membership campaign for 2006 and so on. Now is the time to do it.

Have a great month.

RHONDA GALBALLY AO
Chief Executive Officer

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2. Survey to assist in improving banking solutions and financial information for community groups.

What financial information does your group need to improve your bottom line?

We are currently seeking input from community groups for feedback on the level of financial information available to groups and boards, the types of help sheets that groups are looking for to assist them with running their organisation and also the types of banking products that would most benefit groups.

So we would like your thoughts on the priorities for your group such as information on financial reporting, budgeting, cash flow, auditing, policies, leasing and so on. What is it you need?

This is being done as part of our planned improvements to the **Community Financial Centre** which was created in recognition that groups need the best banking options but also need the best possible financial information, education and guidance to help make financial decisions that provide maximum benefits to their group, their members and their communities.

Westpac and Our Community are committed to helping all Australian community organisations save money. Every dollar saved is another dollar that can go directly to building better and stronger communities and to that end we have developed the **Guide for Community Treasurers** which is available free on the website.

We are now asking groups to take part in a five minute survey and we greatly value your input.

All groups taking part have the opportunity to go in the draw to receive one of five packs consisting of \$1000 of Our Community subscription newsletters and books. For more information contact Denis Moriarty on **denism@ourcommunity.com.au** or (03) 9320 6812.

Groups can fill in the survey by visiting **www.ourcommunity.com.au/financesurvey** or by clicking on the button on the right.



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3. Our Community provides new outlet for promoting jobs in the community sector.

For the past five years, we have had hundreds of requests from community groups wanting to advertise a job in this newsletter and have declined the offers.

Well now as our membership and the number of groups receiving this newsletter and our various other publications have spiralled, we have decided to accede to the demand and begin a weekly community jobs bulletin as well as providing a jobs section on the website at **www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs**.

So now groups will be able to advertise their vacancies on the website, in the regular bulletin Good Moves and we will also run a section in the monthly Our Community Matters newsletter that goes out to every one of our groups.

So if you would like to

1. **Register a job** on the site and in the weekly bulletin, visit **www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs** and fill in the online form. The job will automatically go on the site and into the weekly bulletin.

The cost of listing a job is just the very low price of \$30.

As a special offer, the first 100 jobs to be advertised with ourcommunity, will be FREE

2. **Search for a job.** Once the service is up and running you will be able to visit **www.ourcommunity.com.au** and search through the various jobs listed under community, schools and kindergartens. There are also a series of sub-categories and you will be able to search by the type of positions and also by whether you are looking for part-time, full-time or temporary work or by geographic region.
3. **Register to receive the free weekly Good Moves newsletter.** The free weekly newsletter will contain a listing of all the registered job vacancies available in the community, education and kindergarten sectors and will be automatically sent to you each week. **Click here** to sign up for the free newsletter now.

So if you're looking for a job or want to fill a position in your organisation and want to get out to the widest possible community audience visit the website at **www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs** and register now.

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4. Australians Give \$11bill to Non-Profits Annually – Report.

Almost 90 per cent of Australian adults gave money to non-profits in the year to January 2005 – with each donating an average of \$424 in that year – according to a major new study on Australians' giving habits released in October.

Commissioned by the Federal Department of Family and Community Services on behalf of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, the *Giving Australia* Research Project is the most comprehensive look at giving and philanthropy ever conducted in Australia.

It found that Australians' individual giving had jumped 88% - to \$5.7bill – since 1997, while Australians' volunteering levels had increased by 16% since 2000 – with 41% of adult Australians volunteering a total of 836 million hours in the year ending January 2005.

Among the key findings in the *Giving Australia: Research on Philanthropy in Australia* report, **which did not include donations to the Asian Tsunami relief appeals**, were:

Individual Donations:

- 87 per cent of all adult Australians, 13.4 million people, donated an average \$424 each in the year to January 2005. The median single donation size was \$100.
- In addition to the \$5.7bill in donations by individuals, another \$2bill was provided by 10.5 million Australians who lent their support by participating in raffles, lotteries and other fundraising events.
- More women made a donation during the year to January 2005 (89.5% to 84.1% of men), but men gave larger amounts (reflective of their higher average income).
- Those classed by the survey as middle aged (between age 45-55) were most likely to give, and gave more on average.

Individual Volunteering:

- Of those Australians that volunteered, the average amount of time each volunteered was 132 hours per year.
- Women volunteered more often (45.9% to 35.8% for men) and volunteered for longer (an average of 139 hours in the year to January 2005 to 123 hours for men).
- Generally, those on lower incomes clock up more volunteer hours than those earning \$52,000 and above.

Business Giving:

- Business giving has more than doubled since 2000-01, with more than 525,000 businesses, or 67 per cent of all Australian businesses, giving \$3.3 billion in money, goods, services and time during the 2003-04 financial year.
 - Business giving consisted of 68% in money (\$2.21bill), 16% in goods (\$520mill) and 16% in services (\$520mill).
 - Donations accounted for 58% of business giving (\$1.9bill), sponsorship for 25% (\$810mill) and community business partnerships/projects for 17% (\$540mill).
- Larger businesses engage more often in more "complex" forms of giving - community business projects and sponsorship.
- In terms of the proportion of businesses giving, the construction (92%), health and/or community services (90%) and utilities (87%) industries give most. In terms of amount given, businesses in the property/business services (\$668 million), construction (\$529 million) and retail trade (\$505 million) were the most generous.

Donation Recipients:

- Community and welfare service organisations receive about one-eighth of all money donated by adult Australians. This sector also receives over one in four of all hours volunteered and attracts 30% of business giving.
- Health non-profit organisations, including medical research organisations, receive about one-sixth of the total value of individual donations, one in 10 of all hours volunteered and almost one in five of the total value of business giving.
- Religious institutions received a significant proportion (one-third) of donations by individuals. About one in six of all hours volunteered goes toward these institutions.

Note - the totals listed in the report do not include donations to Asian tsunami relief appeals.

For more information on the *Giving Australia: Research on Philanthropy in Australia* project including an executive summary, are available for download here - www.partnerships.gov.au/philanthropy/philanthropy_research.shtml

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5. Your chance to receive up to \$5000 refund on your direct mail campaign.

Spring is normally the time that community groups are working feverishly to get their pre-Christmas marketing campaigns ready.

Whether it is a direct mail campaign seeking donations or a campaign to try and expand memberships ahead of the New Year, many groups will be out in force over the next six weeks promoting their cause – and searching for ways they can improve or expand their success rate.

Our Marketing, Media & Post Centre (www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapostcentre) has proved a very popular destination for those groups looking for ideas to expand and improve their success rates.

As a further bonus for groups using the **Marketing, Media & Post Centre**, Our Community and Australia Post are now offering community groups the opportunity to:

- receive up to \$5000 refund on their latest direct mail campaign postage cost

OR

- receive the services of a professional Australia Post marketing consultant for a day to help with your next direct mail campaign.

To go in the draw, all you need to do is provide us with some feedback on how you have used the Marketing, Media & Post Centre (www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapostcentre) and an indication of which help sheets have been most helpful in assisting your group in its latest marketing campaign.

This will help us to make the centre more user-friendly, practical and relevant to community groups as possible and also to establish where we can improve the information available.

With the support of Australia Post, one group each quarter will receive marketing support to the value of up to \$5000 which can be taken either as a refund for money spent on direct mail campaign postage or the services of an Australia Post marketing consultant for a day to maximise the benefits of your next direct mail campaign.

How do you enter?

To go into the quarterly draw for the postage refund valued at up to \$5000 or the full day services of a marketing consultant all you need to do is visit the website at www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingoffer and provide details of your group, your direct campaign and also the help sheets that were of most assistance.

One entry only will be drawn each quarter to receive the rebate of up to \$5000 or the free consultancy.

A further three groups will also be drawn and will receive a free copy of the Grants Funding Guide, the revised step-by-step guide to accessing grants funding, valued at \$36.

You can either fill in online or print out the form from the website and fax to (03) 9326 6859 or send by to Marketing Offer, 51 Stanley St, West Melbourne 3003.

Entries for the first draw close on December 12, 2005. To find out more visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingoffer.

Our Community thanks Australia Post for their support in developing the Marketing, Media & Post Centre and also for supporting this initiative.

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6. Preparing for Christmas – Start now.

We mentioned Christmas earlier in this newsletter and the need for community groups to use Christmas as a time to either fundraise, friendraise or even just to get people thinking about membership for next year.

Last year we ran some ideas and reminders to prompt groups at this time of the year and we had a very positive response so we have decided to run a revised, updated and expanded list this year.

Not everyone does have a special Christmas effort but if not, it's worth thinking about when in the new year, you start getting out to your supporters and potential supporters. It's never too early to start thinking about your next campaign or to start planning it.

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

1. **Get in early and ask business partners and supporters what they can do:** 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 considered running a specific Christmas appeal?** 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 fundraising facility visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/donations or email Amy Johansohn 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. Decide the date now and get it in people's diaries. The longer you leave it, the more plans people make.
4. **Is pre-Christmas a good time to get your membership out?** Consider whether it is a good time to send out membership renewals for 2006. Has your group considered offering a discounted "earlybird" membership for those who pay before Christmas?
5. **Are there other local Christmas events you can join in with?** 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?
6. **Can you offer discounted merchandise for members to give as Christmas gifts?** 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? Consider bundling a couple of times together. Or think about putting them together into gift hampers.
7. **Do you have a wishlist?** Have you developed a wishlist of what your organisation needs for the next year (could range from office furniture to sporting equipment, pro bono 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? Are you going to include it your Christmas mailout?
8. **Is your member/donor database in order?** 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 2005 and reminding them of what your group has achieved with their support? And what is their support going to help you achieve in 2006?
9. **What about offering memberships or donations as Christmas gifts?** 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? Have you told them how much more satisfying it is than a box of chocolates?

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.

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7. All I want for Christmas is..... a listing of where to buy Christmas cards and trees.

Christmas – list your Christmas cards, trees and events this year?

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:**

Christmas Trees listing.

If your group is selling Christmas trees this year to raise money, we are also looking at listing that so that when people go searching for that last minute Chrissie Tree they will know where a local group will be selling and when.

So if you're setting up for sales of Christmas trees, let us know where.

- **Organisation:**
- **State:**
- **Location where you are selling trees (full address):**
- **Date you will begin selling:**
- **Hours/days of operation:**
- **Website:**
- **Email:**
- **Phone:**
- **Shop:**
- **Any other information:**

Both will be another feature of the Australian Giving Centre and will go up as a special Christmas feature on the site. Visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/donations and see the various listing for financial donations, computers, clothes, mobile phones etc and ask if your group should be listed up there.

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8. Is your group Feeling the Pinch From Petrol Price Hikes?

Much has been written about the impact of the continuing high level of petrol prices on business and local economies.

And we have also seen a number of welfare organisations and groups saying the petrol prices are starting to have a major impact on their clients and also those volunteers who use their car to assist.

Hardest hit are groups which rely on vehicle use, or on staff and volunteers using their own vehicles and claiming an allowance.

NSW Meals on Wheels chief executive Les MacDonald said despite a 50c per kilometre allowance, volunteers that deliver the meals were finding it tough. Worst hit were those volunteers that drove several hundred kilometres a week to complete deliveries in rural areas.

Other groups that have volunteers visit the house-bound or elderly are also under pressure from fuel costs. Victoria's Royal District Nursing Service uses more than 500 cars to visit its 7000+ clients.

RDNS chief executive Dan Romanis said the service had budgeted for an average fuel price of \$1.10 a litre, and every cent over that figure would cost them \$7000 a year.

Given that the petrol prices have been high for some time now, we are trying to get a feel for the longer term impact for community organisations, particularly those in regional areas where people have to travel longer distances.

We want to know how your group has been affected by the higher petrol prices and what impact it has on your volunteers, your events, your clients, users or members or on other activities.

Often, the social impact is the last thing considered but if there is a major impact on Australia's community groups, then it does have a significant impact on the ability to provide services for the wider community.

We would love groups to consider the following questions and if it has had an impact, we would be keen to hear your practical examples and to feed them into any discussion about the impact of sustained high prices. Please email your responses to: brianw@ourcommunity.com.au.

Petrol Price Survey:

- Have petrol prices:
 - Impacted on your volunteering numbers? If so explain how?
 - Impacted on your fundraising? If "yes", explain how?
 - Impacted on participation or crowds in regular or special events?
- Have there been any other examples of petrol prices negatively impacting on your organisation?
- Have you had to consider emergency fundraising as a result of the increase in petrol prices?

Please send to Brian Walsh at brianw@ourcommunity.com.au.

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9. Tax induction package for non-profit administrators.

Anybody taking on the responsibility for the finances of a not-for-profit needs to know how to report, pay and budget for its tax obligations.

The Australian Tax Office has prepared a package (<http://ato.gov.au/print.asp?doc=/content/64227.htm>) for such an occasion. It's a quick trot through all the different areas of tax that may apply, giving at each point a few links to fuller accounts in more detail.

The paper flags the areas where official registration may be required -- Australian Business Number (ABN), goods and service tax, fringe benefits tax and pay- as-you-go withholding tax – and links to tax office help sheets setting out these procedures and when they apply.

- [Registering your organisation](#)
- [Tax concessions – an overview](#)
- [Endorsement requirements for charities](#)

As the paper says, "Non-profit organisations may be entitled to income tax, fringe benefits tax and goods and service tax concessions. Few tax concessions apply to all organisations in the non-profit sector – they tend to apply to particular types of non-profit organisation." A good treasurer will follow up what the organisation's responsibility is in each of these areas, and whether it is possible to obtain exemption.

Tax issues are inevitably complex, however, and anyone using this package will need to have some grounding in basic tax law. Issues of the definition of 'charity' or 'public benevolent institution (PBI)' are particularly complicated.

Some taxes, too, are state taxes, and here the guide links you to the relevant state departments.

- [Stamp duty](#)
- [Payroll tax](#)
- [Land tax](#)
- [Contact details](#)

The induction document also includes details of the [Non-Profit News Service](#), where the Tax Office sends out free email updates on key tax issues affecting the not-for-profit sector, new publications released for not-for-profit organisations, and changes to the tax law. Back issues are available on the Tax Office Website (<http://ato.gov.au/nonprofit/pathway.asp?pc=001/004/020>), or if you are not yet online you can have them faxed to you by phoning **13 28 60** and following the instructions.

The document also does lead you to one valuable freebie – the Tax Office's [e-Record](#) (<http://ato.gov.au/businesses/content.asp?doc=/content/39649.htm&pc=001/003/003/002/001>)

[&mnu=&mfp=&st=&cy=1](#)), a free, electronic record keeping software product that is intended to help small businesses (including non-profit organisations) to keep good business records and meet their taxation reporting obligations. Version 5 of e-Record has a function which enables you to submit your activity statement online.

Every enterprise of any significance in Australia requires involving the Tax Office, and this paper offers a useful introduction. Some advice is included on certain areas of tax-related business administration –

- [Record keeping](#)
- [Bank accounts and tax file number requirements](#)
- [Proving eligibility for supplier discounts](#)
- [Withholding in business transactions](#)
- [Reporting and paying tax](#)
- [Budgeting to pay tax](#)

-- and this fits in well with the more general guidance given in the [Guide for Community Treasurer](#), produced by Westpac and Our Community and available free online at www.ourcommunity.com.au/treasurers. For anything complicated, however, you may find that you are still obliged to seek professional legal advice from your lawyer and/or accountant.

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10. NSW Scoops National Partnerships Awards.

Partnerships from around New South Wales dominated the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships, announced at a gala function in Melbourne on October 19.

New South Wales-based partnerships won the top awards in the small, medium and large categories, while a pair of long-running partnerships and Australian corporate giant BHP Billiton were recognised in the Special Awards categories.

The winners in the small, medium and large categories were:

- **Small** - Prime Television Wollongong and WAVE FM with Illawarra Division of General Practice, which has led to the production and broadcast of 28 commercials highlighting health issues for the community.
- **Medium** - PMI Mortgage Insurance Ltd with Habitat for Humanity Australia partnership which has built simple and affordable housing for, and with, disadvantaged families.
- **Large** - Lend Lease (and other partners) with the Abraham Mott Centre – this 12-member partnership has developed and implemented a mentoring program and a film festival for young people in the local community.

BHP Billiton won a **Special Award for Impact on the Community**, earned through its many and varied partnerships with community groups around Australia. The company has won a half-dozen Prime Ministers Awards since they began in 1999.

Special Awards for Longevity were awarded to Microsoft with Work Ventures – for their education and training-based partnership which helps the unemployed – and Midland Brick Company with Hills Community Support Group – which works with at-risk youth to provide to provide support, training and employment opportunities.

A copy of the press release outlining the award winners can be found at:

www.partnerships.gov.au/awards/awards_2005.shtml, while a transcript of the Prime Minister's speech at the awards can be viewed at: <http://www.pm.gov.au/news/speeches/speech1641.html>.

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11. Launch of newsletter aimed at promoting better results for community from CSR.

The new Our Community publication, *Business Community Intelligence* was officially launched earlier this month by the president-elect of the Business Council of Australia and NAB chairman, Michael Chaney and Victorian Deputy Premier, John Thwaites.

Business Community Intelligence is a quarterly newsletter that promotes best practice corporate social responsibility (CSR) and aims to provide Australian businesses with the knowledge to ensure the dollars they spend on CSR create the biggest and most effective impact for the company, its staff, their community partners and the community as a whole.

Business Community Intelligence is a joint venture of Our Community and Deloitte Australia and is edited by Dr Annie Duncan.

As CEO of Wesfarmers over more than a decade, Mr Chaney built a reputation as one of Australia's foremost business advocates of the need to expand a company's corporate social responsibility. He told the crowd of business, community and government representatives at Deloitte's Melbourne office that while most companies now believed in corporate social responsibility, there was still a dearth of information to help achieve best practice.

"My view is that this publication is just what's needed at this time in order to self-regulate CSR activities and to allow Australian companies to achieve their full potential," he said. "One of the challenges with implementing CSR programs in Australia today is that while the practice, I think, is terrific, discussion, knowledge, and research on the area is lagging behind actual practice. **Business Community Intelligence** will play an important role in plugging that gap. It seeks to do that by highlighting best practices, by highlighting new ideas and initiatives, and by describing what other research is out there."

Dr Rhonda Galbally, CEO of ourcommunity.com.au said that there was a greater benefit for community groups if business was able to improve their reach into the community. "When business is spending tens of millions of dollars you want it to make a difference and to have the best possible impact on the community groups they are partnering with."

The managing partner of Deloitte Victoria and Chairman of the Deloitte Foundation, Mr Frank Ford, said that Deloitte was pleased to be leading the way in providing information, research, advice and debate on the issue of CSR.

"We are proud to be involved with this publication because it fills the gap and promotes best practice in CSR to the benefit of business, its employees and the community," Mr Ford said.

The Business Community Intelligence newsletter comes out quarterly. The subscription newsletter is available by visiting www.ourcommunity.com.au/csr, emailing service@ourcommunity.com.au or by calling (03) 9320 6807. A copy of the first edition of the newsletter is now available for viewing online at www.ourcommunity.com.au/csr.

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12. Community Briefs

Promote your local heroes.

We are constantly encouraging groups to nominate their volunteers and "local heroes" for any awards or honours that are available as we think recognition of our community workers is a great way of paying tribute and also lifting morale within the group.

We saw recently the News Limited papers around the country run their Pride of Australia awards in each state and pay tribute to the many community heroes who were honoured for their contributions. We congratulate you all and having attended the Herald Sun awards in Melbourne, the stories of grassroots community at work were incredibly inspirational.

So with that in mind we have been asked by the Seven Network to promote a program that is also seeking to promote local heroes and quiet achievers.

The Seven Network is working on a second series of its successful new programme True Stories.

'True Stories' is about personal journeys, triumphs and struggles. As its name suggests, each half-hour episode is dedicated to telling the 'true story' of one individual's personal journey - whether it be the tale of an extraordinary young Australian or elder statesman.

The people featured in 'True Stories' are usually unknown, but their stories are extraordinary - and multi-dimensional. They are the unsung heroes of Australia - remarkable people with equally remarkable stories to tell.

Their stories are courageous - true stories that inspire, empower and provoke. They are stories that evoke a range of emotions as each personal journey unfolds with its own twists, turns and challenges.

'True Stories' is not reporter driven - rather, the individuals take the viewers on their journeys - telling their own stories in their own words.

The programme, hosted by Anna Coren, debuted in August 2005 attracting huge audiences nationwide, and featured each week in the Top Ten most viewed shows. 'True Stories' will continue in 2006 airing in a prime time slot.

If you would like to contact True Stories about an individual with an extraordinary true story, please email truestories@seven.com.au.

New Checks for Those Working with Children

New legislation passed by the Victorian Government will see adults working or volunteering with children subject to a screening process in a bid to prevent "unsuitable people" having direct or supervised contact with them.

The new Working with Children legislation, which passed through parliament in September, will see those in direct contact with youngsters undergo a Working with Children Check to ensure they are fit to work with children.

The check sets minimum standards to take into account relevant past and pending criminal records and charges - as well as professional disciplinary records and whether a person is on the Sex Offender Register or subject to an Extended Supervision Order under the Serious Sex Offender Monitoring Act - to weigh up if a person is eligible to work or volunteer with children.

The checking system will be phased in over five years from mid-2006 – with those working in fields like child protection, juvenile justice, foster carers, school crossing services, outside school hours care, family day care, schools and overnight camps the first to be subject to the checks.

Over ensuing years, further checks will then be performed on those working in other sectors, including child and daycare, pre-schools, kindergartens, religious organisations, refuges, counselling services, commercial childminding or babysitting services, coaching and tuition, paediatric wards in hospitals and child-related photography and talent services.

Those who won't be subject to checks under the new Working with Children legislation include those:

- Aged under 18.
- Not involved in what is defined as child-related work (as defined in the legislation).
- Volunteering in an activity in which your own child ordinarily participates, or are a secondary school student performing volunteer work arranged through your school.
- Working with children who are close family relations to you.
- Who are registered teachers or sworn members of the police, or
- Visitors to Victoria who do not ordinarily perform child-related work in the state.

The Working with Children Check will not be a one-off check. It will be continually updated, with those found suitable to work with children constantly screened for new criminal charges.

Assessment notices will be reconsidered if a relevant criminal charge is recorded, with negative notices able to be appealed to Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal provided the person is not listed on the Sex Offenders Register or subject to an extended supervision order.

The checks will be free to volunteers, while it will cost \$70 for those performing paid child-related work, or a mix of paid and unpaid work. Working with Children cards will be valid for five years.

More information on the checks will be provided to those who need to complete them in 2006 in the coming months. For further queries or information, contact 1300 652 879, visit www.justice.vic.gov.au or email workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au.

SVA Essentials Series 2005 – dates for seminars.

Social Ventures Australia has two seminars coming up – one in Sydney on November 15 and one in Melbourne on November 16 featuring workshops on how people can change your organisation and also on social enterprise development and sustainability.

The one-day seminars will feature:

- **The Law of the Few - *How 20 people can change the fortunes of your organisation forever*** with Kingsley Aikins, CEO of the America Ireland Fund. He will guide participants through one of the world's most successful fundraising models and shares the skills required to attract, nurture and commit new investors and donors.
- **Social Enterprise Development and Sustainability - A new generation for social change.** It will feature live case studies of social firms across the UK, a step by step guide on how to convert a social enterprise into a social firm, tools to assess and establish its viability, sustainable enterprise models and social firm impact assessment and evaluation.

The seminars will also feature a panel of investors sharing their experiences in social investment.

The SVA seminars will be held at AMP, Circular Quay on Tuesday, 15 November 2005 and at Fenix, in Richmond in Melbourne on Wednesday, 16 November 2005

For further information visit www.socialventures.com.au or call Carolyn Lakos (02) 9339 8091

Caring for older parents – do we really know all there is?

The aging population has brought with it some real challenges for today's families faced with the in-home care of an older parent. Carer's are faced with need to divide their time between their own family's commitments and the responsibilities associated with caring for an elderly parent.

While some carer's report looking after an older parent as a positive experience, numerous carers believe it is a difficult time for themselves filled with many physical and emotional stressors.

Gery Karantzas and Professor Marita McCabe, family researchers at Deakin University are hoping to find out how carer's and elderly parents' deal with the issues and stresses that are a part of family caregiving arrangements.

The research project is seeking volunteers between the ages of 30 to 65 years who provide care for a dependent older parent. Alternatively, you may be an older parent aged between 65-85 years and rely on at least one adult child for assistance. The project is gathering information on both the caregivers and care-recipients of families, so the study will involve both the caregiver(s) and care-recipients of families. However, information about your responses will not be disclosed to other family members that take part in the study.

If you would like to help be part of this research project please contact Susan at Deakin University by phoning (03) 9244-6424 or e-mail susan.blaich@deakin.edu.au.

First Community Care conference

The Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) 1st National Community Care Conference will be held on the 3rd – 5th May 2006 in the nation's first and largest city, Sydney. This Conference is expected to bring in up to 1000 delegates from across Australia's community care industry with a superb speaking program focused around the Conference theme 'Riding the Wave of the Future'.

For more information on the Conference to be held from Wednesday 3 – Friday 5 May 2006 at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre in Darling Harbour contact the ACS Conference Organising Team on 02 9799 0900 or email events@agedservices.asn.au

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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. 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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