



Our Community **MATTERS**

ourcommunity.com.au

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Welcome to the October 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, scholarship and fundraising news as well as practical advice and the opportunity to list for free online donations and free online volunteers. We also provide discounted services and products, including the great banking services deal with the National Australia Bank which provides transaction accounts specifically tailored for community groups.

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. Australian community and volunteer spirit shines through the tragedy of Bali. Red Cross Appeal - donate online.

Our thoughts go out - on behalf of our community and indeed all community groups - to those families and communities that have been hit hard by the horrific bombing in Bali at the weekend.

In the last week we have all watched, listened and read of the accounts of the senseless bombing and there would be few communities around the country where people were not touched either personally or in a general sense by the tragedy. There is no doubt that many people reading this will know of people who were in Bali at the time of the attack.

There is still much to come out and as each day passes the list of names of all those who lost their lives from across Australia and the world continues to grow. But what has been evident from the very first moment of the explosion is the incredible and selfless volunteer and community spirit that has come to the surface and continues unabated.

We have witnessed amazing examples of Australian survivors who have acted heroically and also those people who immediately volunteered to help out in any way possible in tending to the injured - whether friends, family or total strangers - or even helping families and friends with trying to identify their loved ones. We have also seen examples of clubs banding together to search for their friends and provide support for each other.

A similar response has happened back home in Australia with the community sector springing into action to provide comfort, support, emergency supplies, medical support, blood and counselling as well as providing help for those families affected. In such times of distress it is an amazing display of the strength of our community sector and the strength of the volunteer spirit in Australia.

We offer our support to those families touched by this tragedy and also to those selfless people who have done so much so quickly to try and alleviate some of the pain. At the same time we also pay tribute to those community groups and volunteers who have been involved in assisting in the Bali efforts. At a time when the community is feeling most vulnerable, it is being bolstered by the strength of our community groups and the willingness of our volunteers to step forward and help out.

You only have to hear many of the directly-affected families talking about the strength and comfort they gave drawn from the overwhelming support of the entire community and how they were comforted by the show of support from total strangers. One Perth father whose son was killed in the attack while in Bali on an end-of-season football trip, talked of losing one son and gaining 45 as his son's teammates had banded around him in support. Whether it is flowers at an impromptu memorial, wearing wattle as a symbol, volunteering to help or offering gifts of money, equipment and basic necessities or just being one of the thousands of people who joined together in support in memorial services around the country, the response of the Australian community has been incredible.

Red Cross Bali Appeal. You can help by [donating online NOW.](#)

The Red Cross has already begun an appeal to help victims of the tragic Bali bombing disaster and assist their families to cope with the tremendous loss and human suffering caused by this devastating incident and also to continue its work in providing relief in the affected areas in Bali and to cover future needs including recovery and reconstruction.

The Red Cross Bali Appeal is now up on the [National Giving Centre](#), our free online donations site supported by the National Australia Bank. People wanting to make a secure online donation to the Bali Appeal can [click here](#) or call the Red Cross Donations hotline on 1800 811 700. For details about sending cheques or where you can donate blood, you can also visit the Red Cross website at www.redcross.org.au

Australian Red Cross is currently providing services to victims of the Bali bombings including reception and registration of evacuees, coordination of accommodation needs and personal support to victims and families.

Australian families and victims of the Bali bombing disaster with urgent needs will have immediate access to emergency assistance from the funds raised through the Australian Red Cross Bali Appeal. The Red Cross has also established a taskforce to liaise with relevant government agencies and community organisations to develop the assessment criteria for the broader distribution of funds raised from the appeal.

You can donate to the [Red Cross Bali Appeal](#) by [clicking here](#). As with all appeals listed on the site, we also encourage those people in larger organisations or even in small business to put the direct link on their own Internet or Intranet sites.

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2. Insights into issues affecting the community with Rhonda Galbally, CEO of ourcommunity.com.au

Normally in this section of the newsletter I talk about some of the major issues happening in the community sector. I still intend to do that but have decided to take a different approach and actually highlight some of the issues of the past month as they affect the groups that I have visited or been involved with.

Sometimes we can concentrate so hard on issues such as insurance and the practical and theoretical arguments that we can lose sight of how they actually affect communities on the ground. Hopefully this new approach will also highlight some of the main issues we face but do so through the experiences of some of the 700,000 community groups.

Each month I will share some of the stories of community groups, the work they are doing and the issues they are facing. I look forward to your thoughts and you can contact me by emailing rhondag@ourcommunity.com.au.

Here are just some of the issues we have encountered.

1. Insurance and community groups who have no money.

In my trips around regional Australia I have graphically had to confront the terrible destruction reaped by the insurance crisis. Out and about, I have been training groups of community and small business organisations in grantseeking and fundraising. This training is part of the project developed by the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development and Department of Natural Resources and Environment - the Community Capacity Building Initiative.

Many issues have come out of the workshops, but the area that has been most poignant has been to see first hand how the public liability insurance crisis has altered the very landscape of community in rural Australia.

Across Victoria for instance, there are thousands of gardening clubs where the membership is mainly drawn from older people. The clubs offer company, creativity and productive activity and are now folding. They are unable to find the six hundred dollars or so needed for public liability; most to date have been operating with almost no budget at all. They are some of the Australian community groups operating without any insurance cover - going for decades and never had any hint of claims.

Now because of all of the publicity about the insurance crisis, the consciousness of the risks of operating without cover have been raised it is either insure or close; many of these groups will close unless we can help them find some way of raising the funds to pay for insurance. Similarly, the wildflower walking groups and many other similar groups are just closing - why take the risk? These are groups operating with tiny or no budgets so they have no money for cover. These are also the community groups that make life worth living, especially in regional Australia. So even where state governments are helping to find solutions such as the excellent scheme provided in Victoria by the Municipal Association of Victoria, (by far the absolute leader in the pack) this is still no solution if the community group has no budget at all - and many of those most valuable to the health and wellbeing of Australians do operate virtually with no funds.

Then there is the camel race - a famous and very successful event - that had been building up in the Mallee over the last five years. Interestingly the camel race was cited by Tony Abbott (not the politician), representing the Law Council on a podium I shared recently for a conference held by the Insurance Council of Australia. Tony suggested that it would be outrageous to suggest that any insurance company would cover the camel race and that if government wanted it to go ahead with such high risk events governments should pay. The assumption was that camel races meant high risk. In fact, the race has never had a claim. The saddest thing is that this famous Mallee event that rallied the whole community will now not go ahead ever again in Australia. In the face of no insurance company even agreeing to give a quote, everyone has withdrawn his or her voluntary efforts to put on a great rallying event that was very important to community spirit.

Every time I visit regional Australia, I see first hand the tragedy wrought by the insurance crisis. The smallest groups and the ones deemed by the insurance sector to be high-risk are dying, even when they have had no claims. This is destroying the Australian community and will leave many people without the support from the camaraderie, fun and prevention of heart disease, stroke, depression, suicide and child abuse that comes from participation in these community groups.

2. The right for Australian parents to choose community Maternity care

Another task for me over the month has been to Chair the launch of the National Maternity Coalition's manifesto based on its extensive research over numbers of years. This is about parents having the right to choose how, where and who supports them in childbirth – including the lead up before and after the birth.

Many old and famous community networks have supported women having some choice over birth and all that it entails, including the former Nursing Mother's Association now the Australian Breastfeeding Association – a wonderful self-help network that supports women in their choice to breast feed. The childbirth education networks have helped women take back some control over birth that for most is a healthily normal rather a medical event.

Then the insurance crisis hit yet another area of community life and midwives have completely lost professional indemnity for home births. The same story as with community groups, in Victoria there has never been a claim. Interestingly over twenty percent of women are referred into hospitals - no risks are ever taken.

In New Zealand seventy percent of births are in the community attended by midwives - birth has been pulled out of hospital firmly into community primary care - the same is true of Western Europe including the UK and Canada. Only the United States has an expensive hospital based system where the midwife is the assistant not the primary expert for a normal birth.

If as a society we seriously want to encourage women to have babies we might be wise to give them much more control over birthing. This along with paid maternity leave will encourage families to have more babies and the evidence shows that it will also reduce the incidence of post partum depression.

Even though I am not going to be having any more babies myself, I am a strong supporter of community birthing options with midwives as well as paid maternity leave. I'm an active advocate even though birth does not affect me personally because I believe that birth and children are a community responsibility. Australia's future is based on the quality of care and the support we give parents and babies - it is not an area that should be left only for individuals struggling on their own – we all have to take collective responsibility for our babies and their future.

3. People with acquired brain injury – the right to a good enough life

One of the best days I have spent over the last month was reflecting on the gains that had been made for people with acquired brain injury (ABI) – a group that has often fallen between every crack.

The day was held during Australian Brain Awareness Week and I facilitated a day's celebration with a hall full of disabled colleagues, carers and friends. The hall was decorated with great works of art, some from established artists – one of the talents emerging after the injury.

Despite the upbeat artistic symbols of achievement, the day presented an opportunity to review progress over 10 years. I introduced the Victorian Minister for Community Services, Bronwyn Pike who as well as outlining the gains that have been made, gave a refreshingly frank account of the many issues still to resolve in providing a dignified, decent standard of life based on human rights. Her honesty and commitment were very much appreciated by the audience.

The piece de resistance of the afternoon was a lively and moving event that I facilitated almost as a hypothetical - except the content was true. Twelve of the original 1992 Ministerial Advisory Council Members on acquired brain injury formed the panel. The former Chair – Bishop Michael Challen had come from Western Australia to participate, along with the then president of Headway, a parent advocate, a legal advocate, bureaucrats from the Transport Accident Commission, the Department of Human Services and rehabilitation medicos concerned with adult and children.

They recalled the history – the hopes and dreams for the Council. They analysed the present situation – what still needed to be done (young people with acquired brain injury are still in nursing homes for the aged). Then we went to the future – how will life be for people with ABI by the year 2050? Consumers joined in from the floor turning the event into a speak-out. Arthur Rodgers head of disability services elegantly summed it all up taking on board the large agenda laid out for the government.

At the end of the day I came back to Our Community feeling completely invigorated from immersing myself in a great celebration of what had been achieved so far from consumer advocacy activism in cooperation with medical, legal and government contributions. By the end of the day I was so impressed by the skills and organisational capacity of the self-help groups such as Headway and the non-profit establishment ones like the Australian Brain Foundation. It is quite realistic that with this level of determined collective effort as a society we will achieve what is a human right - a decent, creative life for people with ABI.

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3. Speaking out without fear or favour - South Australian Government-funded volunteer groups given back their voice

It was good to see the moves by the new South Australian Government to remove clauses in funding arrangements for volunteer groups which prevented those organisations receiving dollars from speaking out or criticising the Government.

This has been a major issue for a number of Governments over the past decade where either through direct contract arrangements or implied threats, non-profit organisations have been forced to choose between receiving funding dollars or advocacy - an unacceptable choice.

Given that so many positive changes have been made to legislation in all states and territories only as a result of the community sector and non-profit advocates pointing out how they affect people, it is important that those on the ground dealing with issues in our community feel free to lobby, advocate, protest, criticise and bring to public attention matters they feel are unfair or in need of improvement.

We support any efforts by Governments that encourage volunteer and non-profit groups to speak honestly, openly and without fear or favour on issues as they affect their constituencies. The threat of funding withdrawal for advocating and doing the job we expect of our community organisations is a ridiculous and narrow-sighted policy that does not have the best interests of the whole community at heart.

For those interested groups who missed the announcement, we have run it here:

"VOLUNTEERS FREE TO SPEAK UNDER RANN GOVERNMENT

As part of the Rann Government's commitment to openness and transparency volunteer and community groups will be guaranteed freedom of speech regardless of their funding relationship with the government.

Under the previous Liberal Government volunteer organisations were required to sign funding agreements which prevented them from 'making statements which would affect the image, reputation or standing of the Minister, department or government'. They were also banned from making public the fact they had received funding without the Minister's approval.

Premier of South Australia and Minister for Volunteers, Mike Rann, has advised he will be instructing the Crown Solicitor's Office to amend these clauses.

"My government will welcome and not inhibit debate from the volunteer community. Good government is not afraid of criticism or new ideas," Mr Rann said.

"It is for this reason that the government believes that community organisations have the right to comment upon and challenge government policy irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist.

"The clauses will instead reflect that the government has no right to request that the funding recipient return funds in circumstances where the recipient has publicly criticised or acted in a way that has damaged the government's reputation.

"The changes will ensure that organisations are politically independent and have the right to criticise, comment upon and challenge government policy irrespective of any funding arrangement that may exist."

Mr Rann said volunteering was important to the South Australian community with more than 420,000 local people giving up some of their free time to take part in voluntary activities each year.

"Our volunteers deserve recognition, they make an enormous contribution to every aspect of community life," Mr Rann said."

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4. Dealing with Risk Management - Even more Free Help Sheets to help groups cope with risk audits.

We have now added a new series of free Help Sheets on the Community Insurance Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au. to help with the issue of risk management, taking the total of free Help Sheets available on the subject so far to 26.

On Wednesday we were also involved - in conjunction with the Municipal Association of Victoria - with a very successful televised seminar for community groups on the issue of risk management and covering the establishment of risk management strategies for groups and advice on identify risks, assessing and prioritising and then treating them.

Representatives from a couple of hundred groups attended the interactive seminars which were broadcast via the Victorian Schools satellite TV network through 54 schools across Victoria. We especially thank the principals of those schools for their support for the local community by opening up their facilities to concerned community groups.

The seminar was taped and we hope that in the coming weeks we will be able to make the contents available to groups across Australia by streaming the audio or video on the www.ourcommunity.com.au site. We have had a volunteer working on establishing a facility on our site to be able to run programming and hope to have that up and running within weeks. We will keep you informed on that.

For the moment the new Help Sheets up on the site are Step by Step Guides to Implementing Risk Management for Your Group (The Seven Stages) and are based on the Australian Standard for Risk Management (AS/NZS4360). The Help Sheets have been produced through funding from the Victorian Government through the Community Support Fund. They are applicable to all groups throughout Australia and are:

Help Sheet Stage 1: [Establishing a Context for Risk Management in Your Organisation](#)

Help Sheet Stage 2: [Communicating Risk Management to Your Organisation](#)

Help Sheet Stage 3: [Identifying Risks in Your Organisation](#)

Help Sheet Stage 4: [Analysing Risks in Your Organisation](#)

Help Sheet Stage 5: [Evaluating Risks in Your Organisation](#)

Help Sheet Stage 6: [Treating Risks in Your Organisation](#)

Help Sheet Stage 7: [Monitoring and Reviewing Risks in Your Organisation](#)

We have also included a series of special risk management tools specifically for sports groups that have been put together by VicSport, again through the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Community Support Fund.

They are:

Help Sheet 1: [Ten Commandments](#)

Help Sheet 2: [What can we do about it?](#)

Help Sheet 3: [What should your risk management policy look like?](#)

Help Sheet 4: [Introducing the risk management concept to your organisation](#)

Help Sheet 5: [Risk management policy implementation](#)

Help Sheet 6: [Coach Risk Management Practices](#)

Help Sheet 7: [Case study](#)

Help Sheet 8: [Monitoring Risk Management Plan](#)

To visit the Community Insurance Centre and download the first 11 free Help Sheets go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/insurance/insurance_main.jsp. Topics include:

- Why implement a risk management program?
- What types of insurance cover may I need and why?
- Introducing Risk Management Into Your Organisation
- An introduction to Risk Management
- The Main Areas of Risk Management for Community Groups
- The Roles of Committees in Risk Management
- Managing Your Volunteers
- Ten Steps For a Safer Organisation
- What are the Legal Obligations of my Group?
- An Introduction to the Risk Management Process
- Top ten tips to securing a better insurance deal
- Step by Step Guides to Implementing Risk Management

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5. Explaining the changes to your new Easy Grants Newsletter and Grants Information Service.

Many of you will by now have received your first copy of the revamped **Easy Grants Newsletter and Grants Information Service** which has been vastly improved after consultation with the community groups who subscribe to the newsletter.

The changes have been made to provide subscribers with more information on how they can use the Easy Grants newsletter to the fullest extent as well as providing added value by including more information to help with your grants applications.

The **Easy Grants Newsletter and Grants Information Service** is now divided into nine distinct sections to make it easier for groups to navigate.

Those features include:

- **Part 1** – This Months Highlights
- **Part 2** – Index of Grants in this Month's Newsletter
- **Part 3** – How to Get the Best out of your Easy Grants Newsletter
- **Part 4** – The Grants Guru: Your Grants Education Service
- **Part 5** – Great Grant of the Month
- **Part 6** - The A-Z Listing of Grants this Month
- **Part 7** – Grant Tracker: Don't Forget These Grants Still Open
- **Part 8** – Local Government Grants Summary – Secure a Local Community Grant
- **Part 9** – Other Our Community Services

The design and layout of the newsletter has also been improved to cut down on the size and also to allow people to more easily identify and print specific grant information. There is also a diagram that helps new grantseekers to work out the information contained in each grant summary and how that can help them in the search for funding.

We think the information provided will make Easy Grants an even more valuable experience and make it easier for novice grantseekers or those with minimal experience in applying for funding and we thank all those who sent emails in for their time, effort and suggestions. For those who don't subscribe, maybe this email might explain why so many do.

"Hi,

We have just begun our second year with ourcommunity.com.au and have received 2 grants from organisations found through Easy Grants. We received \$6,790 from the ANZ Foundation for communal equipment for our new supported unit complex about 4 months ago, and today were notified that the Danks Trust is giving us \$50,000 a year for 2 years to implement a 'life coaching' program.

Thank you

**Suzanne Fisher
Coordinator
Crisis and Supported Accommodation
Hobart City Mission."**

For inquiries about Easy Grants please call (03) 9320 6800 or email service@ourcommunity.com.au.

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6. British report finds community groups suffering as the stockmarket struggles.

While Australian investors are looking to the sharemarket to bounce back, so too are many community groups who - if their experience is anything like British community groups - may be suffering a double whammy from the market.

There's no doubt some companies and individuals have wound back their financial contributions to community groups because their earnings or paper wealth has decreased as the sharemarket has faltered over the past year but the drop in share values is hitting some community groups more directly.

A report by London's Guardian newspaper has found that the collapse of share prices has also affected those community groups - particularly the larger organisations - that have significant funds invested in shares. Some groups have already been forced to close while others have had to drastically reduce services or staffing as a result of multi-million dollar losses.

It reported that the British Guide Dogs for the Blind Association lost more than \$50 million in 2001, resulting in the closing of 13 of its centres and dozens of other groups have also seen significant declines in both their income and asset base.

Close Wealth Management (CWM), a British firm which manages investments for 60 charities, claims poor stockmarket returns slashed 10 per cent off the estimated £30bn held by the UK's 161,000 charities in 2001. The fund manager also warned that the financial viability of two-thirds of charities with long-term capital investments are now under threat, the Guardian reported. The cause of all the trouble has been the rapid shift from the bull markets of the 1990s, when many charities first invested in equities, were richly rewarded and developed expectations that blinded them to the warning signs of the bear market to come.

Another issue coming out of the same stockmarket fall is that there has also been a deterioration of the crucial income from legacies left by people in their wills. "The state of the market undermines the confidence of the giver," British Charity Commissioner David Taylor said. "If they have seen 20 per cent knocked off their own portfolio they may think more about giving to their own family."

Many Australian groups that have invested will be finding similar experiences with even many of the more conservative money-managers recording losses over the past financial year of more than 4 per cent. Groups will also need to watch carefully to see if the drop in the markets has a similar effect on the level of local bequests and legacies. Many groups have significantly increased the level of bequests in recent years and have started new enterprises or established capital building programs based on constant and fairly consistent growth in legacies.

The level and types of investments that community groups have put their money into in recent years is an issue for the Board table but the message from the British National Council for Voluntary Organisations, the voluntary sector umbrella group, is that it is unreasonable to expect groups to avoid the market because it is going through a bad patch. The advice is to rein in spending, invest more cautiously and find other revenue streams.

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7. Speaking Out (Part 2) - A new resource to help groups with social audits, surveys and measuring community performance

And while on the subject of speaking out – something to help you do exactly that.

As well as providing news and views on what is happening around the community sector we also try to use this newsletter to publicise new resources or tools to help non-profit groups raise money, raise their profile and basically run more efficiently and effectively.

One tool that is now available to community groups is the ***Social Audit Cookbook***, a terrific guide for groups wanting to produce surveys or audits to help activists advocate and provide statistical data to back up their arguments.

The ***Social Audit Cookbook*** has been prepared by Eva Cox, the long-time advocate from the Womens Electoral Lobby and the University of Technology Sydney. The cookbook acknowledges that for a long time, advocates have been using statistics and snapshot research findings as social audits to support their claims for communities in trouble but that now there is also a need to also provide measures of social capital and how well communities work.

The cookbook is for community activists who want to produce research reports to support submissions, lobbying and other forms of social action. Its users may not have much experience in community research, or alternatively they may have been involved in the wider debates on how to undertake social audits. As with all cookbooks, users can skip the familiar and not so relevant and find the recipes and ingredients that suit their purpose. It introduces new ways of researching communities and as well as information on more conventional forms of research.

The Social Audit Cookbook helps community groups do exactly that, providing guidelines for research projects such as measuring everything from how people feel about a local park to a more in-depth social audit to see how new welfare policies are affecting the lives of your target groups or how well community members are developing the ability to work together.

As well as introducing the subject of social auditing, The ***Social Audit Cookbook*** also covers:

- **Designing the audits** taking in data collection, measurement methods and checklist
- **Collecting new data: Equipment and ingredients** taking in equipment, group exercises and sample questions for surveys
- **Traditional social indicators**
- **Collating and analysing the research material** taking in dealing with questionnaires and focus groups and group analysis
- **Reporting results and drawing conclusions from social audits**
- **Basic research - for experts and novices** looking at the issue of questions, avoiding bias and other consideration

You can download the pdf file of the ***Social Audit Cookbook*** from the NSW Communitybuilders website by [clicking here](#).

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8. Looking for corporate volunteers in your organisation.

Volunteer Placement Opportunity (1)

Are you looking for corporate volunteers?

Our Community has been approached recently by one of Australia's largest nationwide companies asking if we could nominate a number of worthy community groups who could utilise the services of some 500 volunteers who were keen to do some community work.

The volunteers will be available to do one day's work each and are looking for a series of varied projects that they can get involved with. At this stage, the positions are being offered to groups in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

The volunteers are looking for projects where they could work in small teams of about 10 people (or more) and the project could be done over a six-month period. It could be that there are a number of days for the one organisation where several teams of volunteers work on the one project.

We would love to hear from organisations that have a project that they think would be well-suited to a team of corporate volunteers. If you have an idea or a specific project that you think would be suitable, please email Kate Caldecott at katec@ourcommunity.com.au with information on what is the project, how many volunteers you will need and details about your community group's mission and activities.

We know that many corporates and company executives now receive this newsletter as well so if you have a similar scheme and are looking for community groups to nominate projects we would love to hear from you. Again please contact Kate Caldecott at katec@ourcommunity.com.au.

Volunteer Placement Opportunity (2)

For the second year running we are also providing an opportunity for community groups wanting students to volunteer for placements.

The offer is from the University of Melbourne which is encouraging students to work in the community by offering their skills and abilities completing professional work on a voluntary basis.

The areas of work which can be carried out includes:

- Web site development
- Database design
- Research and evaluation
- Resource development
- Participation in counselling services
- Article writing
- Market research

The students are covered by the University Insurance scheme, and are asked to contribute at least 40 hours of voluntary work to their community organisation. It would be preferable for the students to work in teams but individual placements are also allowed.

Please fill in the following details and fax to Kate Caldecott on (03) 9326 6859 or email at katec@ourcommunity.com.au. Applications will be accepted up to mid-February 2003. Students will start placements in March, 2003.

INDUSTRY CONSULTANTS/STUDENT PLACEMENTS

(Please provide the information below and return to Kate Caldecott **Fax: 9326 6859** or email at katec@ourcommunity.com.au by February 17, 2003.

- **Name and description of Organisation & Contact Details (name and address and phone no. of host organisation)**
- **A brief description of the work to be completed (a description of the work to be carried out by the students)**
- **Requirements (the no. of students required)**

We have a number of universities and individual faculties that now receive Our Community Matters. If you have a similar student placement scheme let us know and we will publicise it to members.

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9. Community briefs

Concerns about GST and prizes for local competitions and shows

There has recently been a number of stories in newspapers around the country raising fears that school students and people who won prizes at local shows or competitions would have to pay GST on the value of any trophies or prizes.

The Tax Office has been at pains since to say that is not the case and have released a further statement to clarify the issue of GST treatment of prizes. We re-print it here to assist community groups.

GST and prizes

The Tax Office issued a ruling on 2 October 2002 which explains the GST treatment of prizes awarded for competitions at country shows, through radio and television, at casinos, clubs and other activities.

The ruling follows lengthy consultation between the Tax Office and the community, broadcasters, agricultural show societies and the gaming industry.

One of the general principles of the ruling is that GST does not apply to low value medals, ribbons and trophies awarded as a symbol or recognition of achievement.

When does GST apply?

The only circumstances where people pay GST on winnings are where the winner is registered for GST and they participate in the event as part of their business.

Trophies, medals and ribbons

In the case of people registered for GST who participate in events as part of their business, they do not pay GST on typical trophies, medals or ribbons awarded to recognise achievement. For example, this includes medals won in the Olympics or the Commonwealth Games. Similarly, winners of perpetual trophies are not subject to GST.

Professionals

Where participants of sporting events are registered for GST and they participate as part of their business, they will be required to pay GST on their winnings. For example, this applies in the case of the winner of the Melbourne Cup, the grand final winning NRL Club, a professional golfer who wins the Australian Open. This has been the case since 1 July 2000.

Cash winnings are subject to GST if the winner is registered for GST and they participated in the event as part of their business.

Amateurs

School children are not subject to GST on prizes for any school competitions.

Contestants in TV game shows are not generally registered for GST and therefore will not be subject to GST on prizes.

Amateur sports people who are not registered for GST will not have to pay GST on their prizes. However, even if registered for other purposes, and the sporting event is not part of their business, then GST does not apply to the prize.

Country shows

Exhibitors at agricultural shows and fetes are not subject to GST on the medals, ribbons or trophies typically awarded at these types of events.

People seeking clarification of how the ruling applies to their situation should seek a private binding ruling from the Tax Office. The ruling, GSTR 2002/3 - Goods and services tax: prizes, can be viewed on the Tax Office web site: www.ato.gov.au

More groups take up online donations.

As we have done on a regular basis we will continue to highlight the groups that are taking advantage of our free online donations service for community groups, brought to you by the [National Australia Bank](#).

- [Red Cross Bali Appeal](#)
- [Very Special Kids Piggy Bank Appeal](#)
- [Churches of Blacktown In Schools \(COBIS\), Keeping COBIS in Schools Appeal](#)
- [The Benevolent Society Spring 2002 Appeal](#)
- [Macfarlane Burnet Institute for Medical Research and Public Health HIV/ AIDS appeal](#)
- [Macfarlane Burnet Institute for Medical Research and Public Health Hepatitis C Appeal](#)
- [HotHouse Theatre Appeal](#)
- [Little Tern Taskforce Appeal](#)
- [Fauna Rescue of Queensland Association Public Fund appeal](#)
- [Life Education NSW Help Get Kids off Drugs Appeal](#)
- [Know the Odds "You figure it out" Appeal](#)
- [Swan Hill Hockey Association Synthetic Turf Appeal](#)
- [Neurosurgical Research Foundation General Appeal](#)
- [Queensland Scout Foundation Appeal](#)
- [Anglicare Victoria 2002 Streets and Lanes Appeal](#)
- [Autism Association of NSW – "Someone to Turn to" Appeal](#)

The number of groups using the service continues to grow. As we did last year we will also run a media campaign in the lead-up to the Christmas/end-of-year giving period so if you are thinking about setting up an online donations service, act now.

For more information on any appeal or to review the list of appeals now up on the site, visit the [National Giving Centre](#). Or for details about listing your appeal on the site, please contact Kate Caldecott at katec@ourcommunity.com.au or by calling Kate on (03) 9320 6802.

Copyright Warning.

We are repeating this for those people who missed it last month and because we have had to take action over the past month to stop a number of groups and local councils from breaching copyright.

In recent weeks we have had a number of examples of people, particularly some councils and regional organisations, passing on the [Easy Grants](#), [Raising Funds](#), or [Scholarship Alert](#) newsletters to non-subscribers or to groups and people outside their own organisation. We would like to point out that this is in fact a breach of copyright.

While we encourage people to send on this free *Our Community Matters* and post it on websites or email to their wider membership, you are breaching copyright by sending on or distributing Easy Grants, Raising Funds or Scholarship Alert. While we don't like to, we have had to take action in a number of instances to stop people distributing it illegally.

We have deliberately priced the newsletters at the lowest possible price (Easy Grants was originally \$470 but is now just \$45 for community groups) so that any community group can afford to subscribe to it. It is all part of our philosophy of democratising the information and making it accessible to all groups. For those groups and councils or regional organisations who have been distributing the paid-for newsletters, either wittingly or unwittingly, we would ask you to stop doing so.

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10. Products and Services

To all those who have received a copy of OC Matters passed on by one of our members and are unsure of our services, here is some basic information. We provide three main newsletters designed to assist community, education and non-profit groups:

The Easy Grants newsletter provides a monthly summary of all grants available in your state/territory - philanthropic, corporate, state, and federal government. Click on <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/newsletter/1/sample.pdf> for a recent sample of an Easy Grants newsletter - only \$45 a year (community group price) which includes year-round access to search our extensive grants database. To subscribe visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/grant_main.jsp

The Raising Funds newsletter provides a monthly resource on the latest fund-raising tools and techniques from running special events to innovative ideas to find money. A sample of the Raising Funds newsletter - which costs just \$45 per year (community group price) for 12 monthly issues can be found by clicking <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/newsletter/4/sample.pdf>. To subscribe visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/fundraising_main.jsp.

The Scholarship Alert newsletter provides a monthly summary of all scholarships, awards and fellowships in your state/territory. Click on <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/newsletter/3/sample.pdf> for a recent sample newsletter. Scholarship Alert costs just \$45 (community group price) for 12 monthly issues plus year-round access to search our extensive scholarships database. To subscribe visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/scholarship_main.jsp

To subscribe to any of these newsletters Click here or e-mail info@ourcommunity.com.au or call us on (03) 9320 6800.

ourcommunity.com.au also offers a free online donations and a free online volunteer service. For details visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving/giving_main.jsp

As mentioned earlier, www.ourcommunity.com.au has formed an alliance with National Australia Bank to introduce the first suite of tailored financial products for community groups. To find out more visit the Community Financial Centre at http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/financial/financial_main.jsp. The Financial Centre contains details of the National's community accounts as well as Help Sheets on reducing fees.

A recent addition to www.ourcommunity.com.au is the National Insurance Centre where we have Help Sheets on reducing risk and the latest news on the insurance issue. You can also register your interest in being part of a pooled insurance scheme to try and reduce the cost of insurance premiums. Visit the Insurance Centre at http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/insurance/insurance_main.jsp.

We have also joined with ACER computers to provide a low-cost, high-quality computer deal for community, education and non-profit groups and their members with personal computers starting from just \$1299. Visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/tech/hardware_packages.do for details.

And don't forget our Management Centre where we have over 100 free Help Sheets on various aspects of running a community group.

You can also purchase our low-cost How-To Guides, including **How to win a Philanthropic Grant**. For more information visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=56

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11. Fast Forward.

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send this newsletter 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.

If you have received a grant or scholarship found on our database or successfully adapted the Raising Funds newsletter, let us know.

We now have button logos for those groups who want to set up links to ourcommunity.com.au from their own websites. You can find them on 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.

We also have brochures for any associations who want to mail out to their member groups and let them know about our products and services. Just let us know and we will be happy to supply.

If you would like to reproduce anything in this newsletter in your own group/association newsletters or websites, you are free to do so. Please just add a small credit line, "courtesy of www.ourcommunity.com.au".

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