

# Our Community **MATTERS**

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Welcome to the latest edition of **Our Community Matters**, your regular free community sector update. It is yet another benefit of membership of [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) – the premier destination for Australia's 700,000 community, education and not-for-profit groups. Our Community provides community groups with the latest funding and fundraising news as well as practical management, board, marketing and community business partnership information. Our Community also operates the [Australian Giving Centre](#), the free online donations service that has so far raised \$5 million for Australian community appeals. A summary of our services is listed at the end of this newsletter. If you have trouble reading this newsletter or have any comments please let us know by emailing [kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au).

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## Dropping Off the Edge – and Clambering Back

“Them that’s got shall get  
Them that’s not shall lose  
So the Bible said and it still is news...”

A **new report** by Professor Tony Vinson for Jesuit Social Services backs up Billie Holliday’s lyrics. Australia’s economic boom has failed to improve the lives of tens of thousands of Australians, leaving them locked into communities of deep disadvantage. ***Dropping off the Edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia*** finds that extreme social disadvantage in Australia is real, and it’s measurable. It’s endemic to many places in this country - and it can be fixed.

Lack of schooling, low family income, disability and sickness, criminal convictions, poor computer skills and long-term unemployment are all endemic in the identified clusters. Indeed in many communities identified as disadvantaged 30 years ago are still cemented into deprivation, and are still lacking consistent long-term strategies.

And these long-term strategies must include support for building the local community infrastructure – the home-grown local groups and community-developed and owned services that give people a chance to participate, to develop a sense of control over their lives, to gain a voice, and to learn coping skills.

A confluence of research from around the world has found that the greatest risk factor for virtually all illnesses – not only the old-fashioned communicable diseases, but also mental illness and non-communicable illnesses such as stroke, heart disease and cancer – is social and economic inequity. A community’s resistance to these challenges, however – its resilience – depends on what Professor Vinson measures as “social cohesion”.

Professor [Lisa Berkman](#) (Harvard School of Public Health) and Emeritus Professor [Len Syme](#) (School of Public Health, University of California Berkeley) trace this social cohesion to such human factors as a sense of belonging and hope. Important, too, is a feeling that one is able to control one’s life and participate socially in a meaningful way. All these factors are boosted by engagement in community activities, and community activities thrive where there is a rich culture of voluntary associations.

The lack of community infrastructure in disadvantaged areas results in a lack of opportunity to build ‘social cohesion’ and a sense of belonging by participating in community groups. So lack of community infrastructure is a significant risk factor for destroying resilience in individuals. Community groups that people can join are much thinner on the ground, and many of the non-government community services that do exist have been imposed from on high by national mega-organisations without any sense of local control by local people.

The locally owned groups that do exist in these areas are struggling to survive. Fundraising by local community groups in impoverished communities is much more difficult, and governance issues abound. The boards of the large non-government icons are glamorous enough for there to be stiff competition for these positions, but it’s always a struggle to persuade people onto the boards of local community gems. Local community groups in disadvantaged areas are vitally important to the health and wellbeing of the community, and they could do with high-level skills on their boards.

Strengthening local community infrastructure is vital because, according to Vinson,

“Building a sense of belonging to one’s locality and increasing neighbours’ interaction with one another can go a long way to shielding children and families from the full impact of social disadvantage.”

Research from around the world shows that belonging to community groups reduces crime and violence, increases respect for diversity, reduces youth suicide, and improves health. A doubling of the rate of membership in community organisations has the potential to reduce violent crime by up to a third and property crime by up to 10%.

To improve health, wellbeing and resilience these disadvantaged areas need more sports groups, more parent groups, more environmental groups, more disability groups, more older people’s groups, more car clubs, more associations of all kinds, addressing all interests and needs. In disadvantaged areas the quantity and quality of this infrastructure is significantly weaker.

As well, research in the new field of social epidemiology shows that communities that have a sense of control over the design, development and governance of that part of the community sector that delivers their services

(e.g. emergency relief, disability services, aged care) are socially and medically healthier than communities where services are imposed through a top-down approach.

There is a strong role for government at every level to kick-start the process of developing more and stronger community infrastructure. More support systems must be put in place to support fragile local groupings.

- Governments must develop solid policy frameworks at individual portfolio levels as a prerequisite for whole-of-government approaches. They must resist the urge to fund communities in uncoordinated, short-term funding bursts – usually without local consultation and ownership.
- Before the rhetoric of whole-of-government takes us over we have to get solid tangible improvements in the actual delivery of all basic portfolio responsibilities.
- As a beginning, governments must resist the urge for short-term funding (a problem that was also emphasised in [‘Strong Communities: Ways Forward’](#) – the Kirner Report to the Victorian Government on much-needed reform steps for the Victorian community sector). At present, Vinson says, “Most programs are funded for two or three years, and then the funding runs out, the program folds, and the community can be left worse off. The let-down occasioned by the premature withdrawal of help can leave people feeling more hopeless than before the process began.”
- Governments must listen to the local community sector. Community groups know more about their problems than anyone; and they know most about the solutions as well.
- Governments must make urgent changes to the taxation system. At the federal level, policy on the community sector currently seems to be constrained primarily by the Tax Office, which wants to keep up tax revenues by making fundraising for local community infrastructure as difficult as possible and framed around the large groups.

While the emphasis on building of community infrastructure is unquestionably necessary, by itself it won't, of course, be sufficient – as Vinson says, “Such building of connections between the residents of disadvantaged areas needs to be accompanied by the creation of new opportunities in education, training and employment that open up life opportunities.”

Still, there is no conflict between these goals. Especially in regional Australia, new economic development and the provision of additional mainstream government services will be enhanced by a strong and facilitatory community infrastructure – for example, services and business are far more likely to relocate to areas where there are many community participation opportunities for families.

A useful tool to complement the Vinson Report is the [Community Manifesto](#) – an outcome of the first Communities in Control conference in 2004. Here you will find outlined the 10 action challenges for building community in Australia – these challenges add to Vinson's vision with a strong agenda essential for the strengthening of Australia's community infrastructure. The Vinson report, meanwhile, can be ordered by [clicking here](#).

**Rhonda Galbally AO**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

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## 2. Could your group be the 2007 Community Idol?

The search has begun in earnest for the 2007 Westpac Australian Community Idol ... Could your group be it?

We're not looking for the biggest or the richest or the most high-profile group. We're looking for the group that displays excellence in serving and reflecting and strengthening its community.

In particular, we want to hear from groups that:

- Promote accessibility and equal participation, opening their arms to all people in the community;
- Have built a dynamic, forward-thinking board or committee of management;
- Have pursued excellence in fundraising;
- Have shown strong community leadership and been prepared to stand up for their community and their cause.



### The process

The process for applying is easy – there are no stringent guidelines you need to adhere to or supporting documents you need to send in.

You do, however, need to be an incorporated association, you need to have been in existence for at least two years, and your entry needs to have been authorised by either the president/chair or executive director/CEO of the organisation.

To enter, fill in the online or hard copy application form and lodge it before 5pm on Friday, May 14, 2007.

Applications will be assessed by a panel of eminent community leaders and three groups will be selected as finalists. The finalists will be notified by telephone.

A representative of all three finalists will be interviewed on stage before a crowd of around 1500 people during the Communities in Control conference on June 4 (finalists from interstate will be flown to Melbourne for the event). Audience members will vote on their favourite and the ultimate winner will be announced during the conference on June 5.

A further 10 entries will be selected to receive "Australian Community Idol Special Commendations" awards. These will also be presented during the conference.

### The prizes

The community group acclaimed as 2007 Australian Community idol will receive \$3000 in cash, courtesy of Westpac.

All three finalists will also receive all current books produced by Our Community and a 12-month subscription to all Our Community newsletters including the *EasyGrants*, *Raising Funds* and *Board Builder* newsletters – valued at a more than \$800.

For interstate finalists, accommodation and flights for a representative to attend the Communities in Control conference will also be paid for.

### How to enter

- **For online registrations** go to [www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol) and click on the button marked "Sign up Online". Fill in the form and click "Submit".
- **For hard copy registrations** go to [www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol) and click on the button marked "Sign up by Post/Fax". Fill in the form and post or fax it to the address/number indicated on Page 1 of the form.

Entries need to be received by close of business on Friday, May 14, 2007.

### Communities in Control

Don't forget you only have until March 30 to be in the running for our special **Communities in Control** Early Bird prize of \$2000 cash for you or your favourite community group.

The conference – to be held in Melbourne on Monday and Tuesday, June 4 & 5, 2007 – is the biggest and most popular annual gathering of people who work in, or work with, or care about communities.

This year's event, titled '**From Advocacy to Policy – Communities Driving Change**' – will focus on the need for community organisations to become central to the search for solutions and practical ways this can be achieved.

Keynote speakers include the 2007 Pratt Fellows, US social change trailblazer Angela Glover Blackwell and Australian social forecaster Bernard Salt, plus community thought leaders including High Court Judge, the Honourable Justice Michael Kirby, revered grassroots organiser Jack Munday, world famous political scientist Professor Dennis Altman, social critic Eva Cox, and many many more.

This year's program also includes

- An extended community networking and community entertainment event (Monday June 4)
- A pre-conference skills day on Marketing, Media & Advocacy (Sunday June 3)
- A specially priced and specially convened half-day Youth in Control forum for community leaders aged 17 to 27 (Wednesday June 6).

Find out more and register at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic2007](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic2007).



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### 3. Hit Us With Your Best Shot ... Seeking iconic images; stirring music

As part of preparations for the 2007 Communities in Control conference we're seeking your suggestions on some of the top advocacy images of our time – images that have changed how we think about our lives, our country and our world.

We've come up with a few examples to get you started:

- Women chaining themselves to public buildings in a quest for equal pay, and burning their bras for equal rights
- Indigenous footballer Nicky Winmar brandishing his bare chest in a statement of Aboriginal pride
- Big Brother contestant Merlin Luck throwing his eviction show into turmoil by taping his mouth shut to make a statement about immigration detention
- Tens of thousands of Australians pouring over Sydney Harbour Bridge in a symbolic gesture of bridging the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- Inner-city streets being closed down by bikes en masse as part of "Critical Mass" efforts to raise awareness about alternative modes of transport
- The slogan "no war" being painted on the Sydney Opera House

But we want to hear your suggestions too.

We're also looking for some ideas of music that we can play during the conference, which this year is focusing on how community voices can (and must) be included in policy development.

We want suggestions, particularly contemporary ones, of songs that have prompted Australians to think and act on community concerns, songs like:

- *Blow up the Pokies* (The Whitlams), which helped to draw attention to some of the damaging effects arising from the spread of poker machines;
- *Let the Franklin Flow* (Goanna & Redgum), which served as an anthem for the campaign to stop the damming of the Franklin River in Tasmania;
- *Roll it on Robbie* (Redgum), providing a humorous promotion of the use of condoms as AIDS began to emerge as a serious health threat; and even
- *Shaddap You Face* (Joe Dolce) credited by some with playing a part in the emergence of new attitudes to multiculturalism in Australia.

Send your suggestions to Denis Moriarty at [denism@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:denism@ourcommunity.com.au).

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### 4. Our Community Hero: Ellen White, Wycheproof, Victoria

**Community Heroes** is a new Our Community initiative designed to honour and celebrate some of the often unsung people who make a real difference to the community.

Our very first Community Hero is **ELLEN WHITE**, a stalwart of her rural community in the Loddon Mallee region of Victoria.

Ellen's nominator, Kerry Anderson, writes:

"I have come to know and admire Ellen White through her role as Chairperson of the Board of Management of the Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program.

"Ellen took on the challenge of community leadership and graduated from the program in 2001 following nine months of intensive skills development, travel and challenges presented by the program.

"When the program needed strong leadership to ensure its continuation Ellen willingly stepped into the role despite the difficulties of chairing a board comprising members who reside over 200 kilometres apart.

"In her own local community of Wycheproof, Ellen is constantly suggesting and implementing new activities. For instance, last year she introduced an art show with an equine theme as an added activity of the Wycheproof Cup. It was a huge success.



**Ellen White**

“In her multiple roles as a farmer in a drought declared region, volunteer, community leader and manager of a Community Resource Centre, Ellen’s boundless energy and enthusiasm sees her involved in countless community activities across the north-central region. This requires long days, extensive travel and considerable personal expense, but she does it cheerfully with no expectation of recognition.

“Ellen White is an inspiration to us all.”

Ellen will receive a Community Heroes certificate, plus a selection of Our Community books and a 12-month subscription to a range of Our Community newsletters. Ellen will also be featured on the Our Community website at, along with other Community Heroes who are featured over coming months.

**If you would like to nominate a Community Hero, download the nomination form at the Our Community Heroes page at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/heroes](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/heroes).**

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## 5. Legally Speaking: Employing young people in your organisation

**By Richard Thompson, Principal of Archer Thompson Lawyers**

Under Work Choices there are specific protections for young workers in addition to those that apply to employees generally.

### **Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) – written adult consent**

An employee’s approval of an AWA is indicated by the employee signing and dating the AWA. If the employee is under 18 years of age, his or her AWA must also be signed by an appropriate person (such as a parent or guardian – but not the employer who is party to the AWA).

If the AWA is not signed by an appropriate adult, the requirements for approval will not have been met. This additional protection is designed to help younger employees who may have less experience in negotiating agreements.

### **Bargaining agents**

Any employee is able to appoint a bargaining agent to help them to negotiate an AWA. Anyone may be a bargaining agent as long as they meet the qualifications for a bargaining agent. The qualifications are that they must not be:

- under 18 years of age;
- acting for the other party to the AWA;
- a bankrupt; or
- convicted of certain criminal offences.

As long as they meet these requirements, the bargaining agent could be a parent, family member, friend, trade union representative or any other person.

The employee must appoint the bargaining agent in writing and give a copy of the appointment document to the employer before agreement negotiations begin.

An employer or employee in relation to a proposed AWA may be liable for a penalty for failing to recognise the other party’s bargaining agent. The penalties are \$3300 for an individual or \$16,500 for a corporation.

An employee cannot be sacked for refusing to negotiate, make, sign, extend, vary or terminate an AWA.

### **Unlawful termination**

The unlawful termination provisions of the Workplace Relations Act prohibit dismissal on a range of grounds including age. This means an employee cannot be sacked because the employer thinks they are too young (or too old).

Unlawful termination (which is different from unfair dismissal) applies to all employees in Australia, regardless of the size and type of the business in which they are employed.

The Government will provide financial assistance of up to \$4000 for legal advice for employees who believe they have been unlawfully dismissed and who meet certain eligibility criteria. (For more information on this assistance scheme, see the ['WorkChoices and termination of employment'](#) fact sheet.)

## Youth wages

The Australian Fair Pay Commission is responsible for setting and adjusting minimum wages, including minimum wages for juniors.

Minimum wage rates for juniors will not fall below the level specified in awards after the increase from the 2005 Safety Net Review.

The Fair Pay Commission must have regard to ensuring that junior employees are 'competitive in the labour market' when setting and adjusting their minimum wages.

The Fair Pay Commission will also be able to determine one or more special Federal Minimum Wages (special FMWs) for particular groups of junior employees.

**For a free initial consultation on legal issues please call Richard Thompson at Archer Thompson lawyers on (03) 98278279 or email to [richard@archerthompson.com.au](mailto:richard@archerthompson.com.au).**

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## 6. Community TV in life and death battle

As we're always saying in this newsletter, and we'll be saying even more loudly during the June [Communities in Control](#) conference, it's vital that community organisations have a say in the formation of policy if those policies are to have any hope of working.

One campaign that goes a long way to proving this point is one that is currently being waged by the community television industry to try to change government policy as it relates to the transition to digital transmission.

As most people would know, community television is an important part of Australia's media landscape, broadcasting to an audience of millions and providing diversity and a vital alternative to the mainstream media.

Major players in the community TV arena include C31 in Melbourne, which has more than 3 million viewers, TVS in Sydney, Access 31 in Perth, BRIZ 31 in Brisbane, and C31 in Adelaide.



At present, community television broadcasts only in analogue – a clear problem given that Australia is currently in the process of switching to digital.

In fact, around one in five households has already made the switch and it's expected that the analogue service will be switched off entirely in Australia by 2010-2012.

All this leaves community TV in a rather parlous position. That is, unless the community TV industry is assisted to switch to digital.

To that end, C31 has spearheaded a campaign to persuade members of the public to delay their own switch to digital until community TV is given the opportunity to do so as well.

"Don't go before we do" is the catch-cry of the campaign, which asks those who care about community TV to write to the Prime Minister and tell him why they won't be switching to digital until community TV is protected.

The good news is the campaign appears to be gaining some traction, with a Government-controlled House of Representatives Standing Committee releasing a report in February that recommends urgent action by the Federal Government.

The committee says the Government must ensure room is left on the digital spectrum for community TV, and urges it to immediately provide \$6 million to the community TV sector to be used in the conversion of broadcast equipment to digital, plus an additional \$1.7 million a year until analogue is switched off for good.

"The last decade has seen spectacular growth in the community television sector," says committee chair Jackie Kelly in her foreword to the committee's report. "If this growth is repeated in the next decade then enormous diversity will be added to Australia's media."

Ms Kelly says community TV serves as an incubator for new programming for the commercial sector and a training ground for new talent in production and content.

And she says the only way it can survive is if the committee's recommendations are taken up by the government.

"Community television should be able to participate in the exciting future of digital broadcasting and continue to develop the richness, diversity and experimentation which have characterised its growth to this point.

"Any delay in ensuring digital broadcasting would be irresponsible and fly in the face of all Australian Government undertakings to date."

For more information on the C31 campaign, visit [www.c31.org.au](http://www.c31.org.au) or watch the campaign ad on You Tube at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4PESk4GAFO](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4PESk4GAFO).

To read the Standing Committee's report, go to [www.apf.gov.au/house/committee/cita/community\\_broadcasting/firstreport.htm](http://www.apf.gov.au/house/committee/cita/community_broadcasting/firstreport.htm).

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## 7. Debate over role of not-for-profit sector heats up in the UK

A new paper published by the UK's Directory of Social Change has added more fuel to the "big versus small" debate.

The [DSC's paper](#) says that just 2% of the UK's voluntary (community) sector organisations are wielding a disproportionate influence over government policy, which in turn is aimed at this tiny minority of groups.

The report also argues that the vast majority of the community sector needs grants funding, rather than public sector contracts, and that it is not the government's place to determine the future role of sector.

It says people don't want their voluntary activities being defined by the state.

"People do not volunteer their precious time and energy to 'social and economic regeneration'; they do it because they want to find a cure for cancer, or believe that children who have been abused need to be helped, or that arts and culture enrich people's lives."

The report says there is a "clear and recognised benefit to government" from voluntary action "and it should be funded, by grant, with as little regulation as possible, to priorities determined by the groups delivering the work".

Meanwhile, a right-wing English thinktank has suggested that any charity receiving more than 70% of its funding from the state should be reclassified as a statutory agency.

[Civitas](#) has outlined a three-tier classification system, suggesting that those receiving less than 30% of their income from the state retain their charitable status, those receiving between 30% and 70% be re-classified as state-funded charities and able to receive more modest benefits, and those receiving more than 70% of their income from the state lose their charitable status.

The organisation says some large charities have fallen into the so-called "animal farm syndrome", growing into "quangos" (quasi non-government organisations) that increasingly resemble the state.

Charities have reacted angrily to the report, saying the Civitas policies would further burden an overstrained sector and further complicate an already tangled system.

A spokesman for Acevo, a support organisation for English not-for-profits, said the Civitas proposals were an "administrative nightmare" and the report was a solution in search of a problem.

And in yet another indication of the increasingly heated nature of the debate around charitable status following the adoption of a new Charities Act last November, private schools in Britain have been warned that they may need to open their lessons to pupils from state schools if they want to keep their tax benefits.

The Charity Commission has published [proposals](#) saying fee-paying independent schools may also be expected to develop strong and transparent educational partnerships with local state schools, which could include sharing sports grounds and arts facilities, if they want to call themselves charities and qualify for tax benefits.

The *Guardian* newspaper reports that schools will have to prove for the first time under the new act that they still bring a "public benefit" if the cost of their fees are beyond the means of people on low income.

That will mean offering more free or subsidised school places to children from low-income families as well as the option of bursaries.

"Where people on low incomes are unable to benefit from a charity in an immediate or direct way, because they cannot afford to pay the fees charged for its services, there must be other reasonable ways available for them to benefit," the Charity Commission says.

The advice has been issued as part of a consultation period that is expected to wind up in early June. The public benefit clause in the new British Charities Act becomes law in early 2008.

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## 8. New report paints challenging picture of community services & welfare sector

An increased demand for services, more pressure on staff, burdensome administrative requirements and a continued challenge in matching resources to demand – this is the bleak picture that has emerged following the release of a new report on the Australian community services and welfare sector.

The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) report, which is drawn from the responses of 857 surveyed agencies, looks at service use, income, expenditure and workforce issues for the community services and welfare sector.

Key findings include:

- **An increased demand for services** – up 4% from 2004/05 to 2005/06. A total of 93,961 people were turned away from community and welfare services in 2005/06, the majority (72%) because services were operating at maximum capacity and had to ration access. This problem was most acute for housing and disability supported accommodation services. The majority of agencies (56%) reported tighter targeting of their services than in the past and a total of 90% reported that their waiting lists were the same or had worsened between 2004/05 and 2005/06. Many agencies (69%) reported that their clients were presenting with increasingly complex needs, and many said their most pressing training need was how to work with clients with difficult and complex problems.
- **An increase in the total number of paid staff** – up 3% in 2005/06 from the previous year, although the report points out that while staff numbers have risen, the number of people assisted has increased at a greater rate and thus work intensity has increased. A total of 72% of agencies agreed that the unfunded work by staff and volunteers had increased, and 58% said they had experienced difficulty attracting appropriately qualified staff. Turnover was recorded at 14.3%, compared with the all Australian industry average of between 10% and 12%.
- **Administration requirements required under government contracts are imposing a significant burden** on community services and welfare agencies, particularly those from smaller organisations. Many reported that the administrative burden was drawing resources away from service delivery, suggesting that extra funding was needed to assist with this burden, or financial and program reporting requirements should be simplified.
- **Matching resources to demand remains the fundamental challenge facing community services and welfare organisations**, even though agencies secured a 7.7% increase in overall income between 2004/05 and 2005/06. Around 10% of that increased funding came from government sources, 3.4% came from "agency own source income" (including donations, sponsorship, sales, etc.), and 1.6% came from an increase in client fee incomes.

The full 2007 Australian Community Sector Survey is available online in the publications section of the ACOSS website at [www.acoss.org.au](http://www.acoss.org.au).

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## 9. Latest trends in grantmaking, grantseeking

You'd have to have been living under a rock for the past 12 months to not have realised that the environment has suddenly and significantly been catapulted close to the top of the national agenda.

Climate change, drought, water scarcity and bushfires have all been topics for intense discussion and debate in the past few months, and that shift is now being reflected in the allocation of grants.

As most of you would know, here at Our Community we maintain Australia's most comprehensive grants database ([EasyGrants](#)), tracking thousands of new and ongoing grants programs that are provided by governments (local, state and federal), as well as corporate and philanthropic foundations.

That means we're in a position to pick up on new trends in grantmaking, some of them subtle, some of them – such as the recent shift in environmental priorities – not that hard to pick.

To take just a few examples, some of the new grants that have emerged in recent months include:

- The Country Women's Association **Emergency Family and Community Grants**, which aim to meet the immediate household needs of rural families and to fund community based activities in areas severely affected by drought;
- The Tasmanian Department of Economic Development's **Community Recovery Fund**, which provides grants for community groups, primary producers and small businesses that have been affected by the recent bushfires;
- The Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia's **Disaster Relief Assistance for Primary Producers**, which aims to assist in meeting the needs of primary producers who have been affected by a disaster;
- The Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water's **Lifestyle WaterWise Grants Program**, which encourages not-for-profit organisations to reduce consumption of treated drinking water; and
- The Rural Finance Corporation's **Bushfire Recovery Assistance - Clean-up and Restoration Grant**, which is available for primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations affected by bushfires in Gippsland and North East Victoria.

To find out more about these and other grants currently available, keep an eye out for the March edition of [EasyGrants](#) (due out on March 19).

### Help for non-DGRs

While we're on the topic of grants, an Our Community member has written in asking us to provide some information on where community organisations that don't have deductible gift recipient (DGR) status can go to look for funding.

"It is becoming a huge problem in the community sector and creating a have/have nots situation," she writes.

This is an issue that has been on the Our Community radar for quite some time; we've been a long-term critic of the narrow and seemingly inconsistent line the Tax Office takes in deciding who does and who doesn't get DGR and have often urged non-DGRs to write to your local MPs about this issue.

Until this situation is changed, the many thousands of groups without DGR will continue to be excluded from most of the grants programs provided by philanthropic and corporate grantmaking organisations.

Having said that, it's important to note that philanthropic organisations still provide only a small proportion of the billions of dollars given away every year in grants. Governments rarely if ever exclude non-DGRs from their grants, so there is still an enormous pot available to non-DGRs.

Groups without DGR could also consider partnering with other groups that do have DGR (believe it or not, there are some around!) when wanting to access DGR-only money to run a project.

### And before we leave the subject of grants ...

Our Community recently delivered a number of training sessions in the Wide Bay Burnett Area Consultative Committee (ACC) area in Queensland on the subject of grant writing.

The full-day sessions, delivered in six locations throughout the ACC region, were highly successful with demand far exceeding capacity.

One of the key issues that continually came up during these sessions (and one that's common to a lot of the groups we work with, which is why we're including this information) was the clear lack of planning that many community groups seem to be undertaking in their search for grants.

As Patrick Moriarty, Director of Training and Development at Our Community, told the program participants, there is a simple process you can go through to improve your planning, involving development of a template that becomes the source of information for grants applications, and thinking laterally about what grants might fit your projects.

The training sessions were rounded out by covering how successful grant applicants could improve their chances of future success by making sure they acknowledge grantmakers and acquit and report on the success of the grant.

A key word that was mentioned in all sessions was **perseverance**, as from our experience many community groups just give up after one or two attempts, signing up for life membership of the "You Can Never Win Grants" gang.

To stop this happening to your group, Patrick advises groups to get feedback on your applications wherever possible:

- from the grantmaker (if they are willing and able to provide feedback)
- from someone else from within your own organisation on what they thought of the application
- from local *grant-writing* experts such as local council grant writers, regional development staff, ACC's, etc.
- from local *writing* experts, such as newspaper journalists and editors, communications professionals and creative writers.

The Wide Bay Burnett sessions provided a solid illustration of how many people there are out there who are willing to learn more about grant-writing and then go away and apply what they've learned.

Participants walked out of the sessions with not only a practical framework for developing more successful grant applications, but also a long-term strategy for ensuring the sustainability of their groups, not just from grants.

Cameron Bisley, Executive Officer of the Wide Bay Burnett ACC was impressed with the way that all sectors of the community – businesses, community and councils (and including experienced grant-writers) – were all able to take something away from the day. With more than 250 enthusiastic locals now armed with the knowledge and tools to get more grants, we look forward to hearing of success stories in the near future.

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## 10. Community Classifieds

### Emails from the Edge – book offer for OC members

Our Community members are eligible for a special reduced price on the new book by Ken Haley, *Emails from the Edge, a Journey through Troubled Times*.

The book, published by Transit Lounge, chronicles Haley's descent from a high-flying career as a successful reporter, world traveller and sub-editing gun for hire, to a person who a year later was living a nightmare, having suffered a brain meltdown, protective arrest in the shadow of a military invasion and 10 terrifying days and nights in a Middle Eastern asylum.

Worse was to come: months of insanity, sleeplessness, dark broodings, dread, isolation, paranoia and, ultimately, despair leading to an attempt to take his own life.

Usually priced at \$32.95, a dozen copies of *Emails from the Edge* are available to Our Community members at a special reduced price of \$25 including postage. Order by emailing [info@transitlounge.com.au](mailto:info@transitlounge.com.au) or by downloading the order form at [www.transitlounge.com.au](http://www.transitlounge.com.au). Make sure you mention that you saw this offer in Our Community Matters.



Ken Haley

## Space wanted

A Queensland disability services group is seeking space in a large house or offices in need of a new tenant.

FSGA, which works in partnership with people with a disability, people with a mental illness, people who are frail and aged, and their carers, is open to negotiating on rent or improving and maintaining a rundown property in return for space.

The group is looking for a building, or a space in a building, anywhere from Brisbane to Tweed, that would be suitable for use as an office and a clubhouse. For more information contact Vicki at [vickib@fsg.org.au](mailto:vickib@fsg.org.au) or telephone (07) 5564 0655.

## Computer equipment

Microsoft software and Cisco hardware are being made available to community organisations at a small fraction of the normal retail price through [DonorTec](#). Under Microsoft's previous program software was provided free but for a smaller number of organisations.

The Donortec program is delivered in Australia by [CommuniT](#), a [CISA](#) project, in partnership with [TechSoup](#) in the US, and in conjunction with Donortec's donor partners, Microsoft and Cisco.

Products currently available include Microsoft Office 2007 Professional (\$26 for eligible groups), the Vista operating system upgrade (\$13), and Digital Image Suite 2006 (\$6.50). Cisco hardware products, including wireless routers, are also available.

In order to qualify groups need to be approved as an Income Tax Exempt organisation by the ATO and must have an ABN. Note that religious, business and professional associations are not eligible, but many organisations in the cultural, health, training, youth, conservation and community services sectors are. For more information go to [www.donortec.com.au](http://www.donortec.com.au).

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## 11. What's on in the community sector – dates for your diary

Our Community's online [Calendar of Events](#) – the place where we list nationally significant events focussed around a major community or advocacy/awareness issue, has become one of the most visited pages on our website.

And now we're bringing the calendar to Our Community Matters.

Just some of the events that are taking place over the next month include:

- **World's Greatest Shave to Care and Cure**  
March 15-17
- **Reusable Nappy Week**  
March 19-25
- **Harmony Day**  
March 21
- **National Get to Know Your Neighbour Day**  
March 25
- **National Smile Day**  
April 1
- **Walk to Work Day**  
April 7

More events, plus the full listing for each event (including organisational contact details and websites) can be found in the online Calendar of Events on the Our Community website at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/calendar](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/calendar).

### FEATURED EVENT:

#### Get to Know Your Neighbour Day



Get to Know Your Neighbour Day began in 2003 after the remains of an elderly woman, Elsie Brown, were found inside her suburban Melbourne home. She had died two years earlier, forgotten and alone.

Appalled by the story, Melbourne man Andrew Heslop launched the first Neighbour Day on March 30, 2003. And in 2007, the event is going global, thanks to the support of the United Nations.

Held on **Sunday, March 25**, the event encourages people to get to know their neighbours and thereby help to develop safer, more caring communities.

Organisers are urging people to take part in this year's event by:

- Saying g'day to your neighbours
- Making a special effort to introduce yourself to older residents in your street and anyone who lives alone
- Leaving your mobile and home phone numbers for their use in an emergency
- Agreeing to keep in contact.

Visit [www.neighbourday.org](http://www.neighbourday.org) for more.

Key Our Community dates coming up include:

- **EasyGrants issued:**  
March 19
- **BusiGrants issued:**  
March 16
- **Grants Management Quarterly (GMQ) issued:**  
March 30
- **Communities in Control Early Bird finishes:**  
March 30

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## 12. Community Briefs

### Online donations continue to surge

Online donations through the [Australian Giving Centre](#) have continued to power along with more than \$75,000 raised during February – more than triple the amount that passed through the service at the same time last year.

As we highlighted in last month's newsletter, figures from the Giving Centre, which is a free service operated by Our Community with the support of Westpac, is proof positive of the increasing popularity of the online method of donating to community causes.

And with the Australian Bureau of Statistics' latest Internet Activity Survey finding that there are now more than 6.65 million active internet subscribers in Australia, you really can't afford to be left behind.

If you'd like to make a donation to a community appeal, or set up your own appeal page, visit [www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving).

### Governance training update

Bookings are still available for the four-day [Certificate IV in Business \(Governance\)](#), a nationally accredited community governance training program developed and delivered by Our Community in partnership with BSI Learning.

The four-day program is taking place from May 7-10, or you can book in for the four single-day sessions, which are being held on March 16, April 20, April 27 and May 11. (All four days must be completed in order to qualify for the Certificate IV.)

Find out how to book in by visiting [www.ourcommunity.com.au/certificateiv](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/certificateiv).

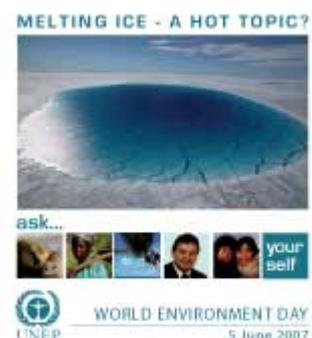
Councils, community groups or government departments wanting to develop a tailored governance program for their local area for a minimum of 15 people should contact Our Community's director of training and development at [patrickm@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:patrickm@ourcommunity.com.au) or phone (03) 9320 6810. As an example, the Wide Bay Burnett ACC has developed a community governance capacity building project that will deliver Day 1, which focuses on the core components of governance, in six locations throughout the region, with the remaining three days delivered consecutively in two locations. This enables a broader range of people to have access to basic governance training, while those wanting a deeper understanding of governance can achieve a nationally accredited qualification.

### World Environment Day Awards 2007

Nominations are now open for the United Nations Association of Australia's World Environment Day Awards 2007.

The program is designed to recognise businesses, local governments, community organisations, individuals, schools and the media whose work serves to protect, manage or restore the environment.

Nominations close on May 9. Visit [www.unaavictoria.org.au](http://www.unaavictoria.org.au) for more.



## Water challenge easy as ABC

Could you manage with just 40 litres of water over a 40-hour period?

That's the challenge being set by ABC Local Radio in a nationwide initiative designed to encourage people to think more about their water use patterns.

The 40 Hour Drought initiative will commence at 7am on Wednesday, March 21 and finish at 11pm the following day. During this time participants are being asked to limit their water use to 40 litres, a challenging task given that the average Australian uses 200 litres a day.

The 40 Hour Drought is the brainchild of four young people – Gabrielle Connolly from Mitchell in Queensland, David McPherson from Streatham in Victoria, Letitia Irwin from Rockhampton in Queensland and Martin McConnon from Stonor in Tasmania who took part in the ABC's Heywire Youth Issue Forum in February.

"We're stoked that ABC Local Radio has taken up our idea and is now sharing it with others around the country. It shows what happens when the views of young people get heard," said Martin.

To register for the 40 Hour Drought visit [www.abc.net.au/water](http://www.abc.net.au/water).

## Fundraising code overhaul

The Fundraising Institute of Australia is undertaking a full overhaul of its Codes of Ethics and Professional Conduct, which serves as guides to ethical, accountable and transparent fundraising.

The review, which is being undertaken in consultation with FIA members and fundraising industry stakeholders, is expected to conclude by July 1, 2008.

To find out how you can have your say on the drafts, visit the FIA website at [www.fia.org.au](http://www.fia.org.au). More detailed information on the review will appear in the next edition of Our Community's Raising Funds newsletter – due out in early April.

## Challenging UK fundraising ad cleared to run

A controversial UK advertising campaign insinuating that donors are more likely to give animal charities than disability charities has been deemed inoffensive by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

The Enable Scotland posters showed images of a woman with learning disabilities bearing the slogan "If I ate out of a dog bowl, would you like me more?" and of a man with the slogan "Would you like me to sit up and beg?"

Enable Scotland said the campaign was developed to highlight the fact that 11% of people in the UK donate to animal welfare organisations and only 6.6% give to disability organisations.

The ads, which ran on buses and trains throughout Scotland during January and February, received several complaints from people who believed that they denigrated animal welfare organisations and were offensive to people with disabilities.

To view the ads visit [www.enable.org.uk](http://www.enable.org.uk).

## New take on "chugging"

Also from the UK comes the news that a number of organisations have adopted a new method of campaigning that employs similar methods as those used by street fundraisers (also known by some as "chuggers" – short for "charity muggers").

Oxfam and ActionAid are reportedly among a number of organisations sending out representatives dressed in the same brightly-coloured branded gear worn by street fundraisers to recruit campaigners and volunteers.

Individuals registering their support are contacted at a later date to see if they are willing to extend their support to include a financial contribution, the *Guardian* newspaper reports.

As Australian fundraisers often follow UK trends, it's likely that it won't be too long until we see this method emerging locally as well.

## 13. Good Moves: Community Jobs & Board/Committee vacancies



# Good Moves :: Jobs Bulletin

[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

### JOB VACANCY LISTINGS (Paid Positions)

#### Australian Capital Territory

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Executive Director</a>	Women's Centre for Health Matters	<a href="#">Details</a>

#### New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Executive Officer</a>	National Ethnic Disability Alliance	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Building Services Manager</a>	Orange Community Resource Organisation Inc.	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">HR Manager</a>	Orange Community Resource Organisation Inc.	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Case Managers - Forbes and Orange</a>	Orange Community Resource Organisation Inc.	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Accommodation Support Manager</a>	Orange Community Resource Organisation Inc.	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Director</a>	Hoxton Industries	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Cumberland/Prospect - Brighter Futures Early Intervention Program - Program Coordinator</a>	Wesley Mission Community Services	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Family Support Worker</a>	Wesley Mission	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Helpdesk Officer</a>	National Relay Service	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Project Support Officer</a>	NSW Reconciliation Council Inc.	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Executive Officer</a>	NSW Reconciliation Council Inc.	<a href="#">Details</a>

#### Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Community Well-being Services Manager</a>	Redcliffe Neighbourhood Centre Association	<a href="#">Details</a>

#### Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Community Development Officer</a>	Fair Wear Campaign	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Events Coordinator</a>	Kids Under Cover (KUC)	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Project Officer</a>	Gateway Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN)	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Executive Officer</a>	The Network for Carers of people with a mental illness	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Customer Service Officer</a>	Vision Australia	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Occupational Therapist</a>	Vision Australia	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Radio Station Coordinator</a>	Vision Australia	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">JUMPJET Circus Project Manager</a>	Westside Circus	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Supporter Services Assistant</a>	Australian Bush Heritage Fund	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Fundraising/Development Officer - Part Time</a>	The Gawler Foundation	<a href="#">Details</a>

## BOARD/COMMITTEE VACANCY LISTINGS (Volunteer Positions)

The following is a list of the most recent Board/ Committee vacancies listed at Our Community. To view other Board or Committee vacancies [please click here](#) (This matching service is free)

### Australian Capital Territory

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Canberra Fathers and Children Service Inc.	<a href="#">Details</a>

### New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Treasurer, General Board Member</a>	Nutrition Australia NSW	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Hoxton Industries Ltd	<a href="#">Details</a>

### Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Treasurer, Secretary, General Board Member, Establishing a new board</a>	Ashmole Road Community Centre	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	FSG Australia	<a href="#">Details</a>

### Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Ethiopiaid	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Treasurer</a>	Interplast Australia & New Zealand	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Diamond Valley Learning Centre	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Chair, Treasurer, General Board Member</a>	Vermont South Community House	<a href="#">Details</a>

[www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs)

## 14. Fast Forward

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send it onto your friends and fellow community groups in your area. People can sign up to receive their own copy at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/signup](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/signup).

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

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please email [service@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:service@ourcommunity.com.au) and put "Unsubscribe-OCM" in the subject line.

## 15. About Our Community

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise providing:

1. [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) - Australia's most useful website and publishing house, encompassing the nation's largest and most diverse membership base and 12 Knowledge Centres – accelerating the impact of Australia's 700,000 community organisations
2. [Australia's Giving Centre](#) – Helping individuals and business give in every way
3. [Australian Institute for Community Practice and Governance](#) - practical and accessible certificated training delivered locally through our training Institute
4. [Centre for Best Practice in Grantmaking](#) - the unique suite of grantmaking services for government
5. [Centre for Community-Business Partnerships](#) - cutting edge Corporate Social Responsibility resources for large, medium and small business and community organisations