Boosting your Chances with Online Donations:

A step-by-step guide for organisations using the GiveNow.com.au giving service

Contents:

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Introduction

If you don't turn your attention to internet fundraising, you're ruling yourself out of consideration for an ever-increasing slice of Australian donations.

Collecting donations online has a number of benefits for both your organisation and your supporters. An online donations function:

1   Attracts new donors – and donors who usually give *double* the average donation amount, and sometimes even more.

2   Is convenient for donors, who can access your appeal anytime and from anywhere.

3   Is convenient for organisations – listing your appeal through GiveNow.com.au means you don't even have to process your own donations or handle receipting (although you can if you want to).

4   Helps portray your group as a modern, responsive organisation, boosting your appeal to the internet generation.

5   Streamlines your fundraising administration by providing electronic options for the collection and storage of information.

6   Is a no-cost solution – only the standard bank credit card processing fees are taken from the donation.

The GiveNow.com.au service makes giving and receiving comparatively easy.

But it's not a totally effortless task – an online donations facility is a basic **pre-requisite** for successful fundraising, but it's not a **solution**. You must redesign your procedures to funnel people into the donation zone.

This guide will help you learn how to get online and then get the most out of your online donations function.

It will take you through the eight key steps you need to go through to maximise your chances of online fundraising success –

1. Thinking through your appeal

2. Getting organised within your group

3. Getting your appeal online

4. Spreading the word

5. Asking people to give

6. Using the money as you said you would

7. Saying thanks

8. Checking what's working and changing what's not

Step 1: Think through your appeal

Probably the most important factor in generating donations is how you ask for money.

When you set up an online appeal, you need to think carefully about what you're asking for. What is your group's reason for being? Why is it important? Why should anybody else care?

Remember, people have no interest in giving to your organisation, as such; they give to you because they believe in what you are working to achieve.

Your task is to inject potential donors with the enthusiasm you feel – to transmit the spark that will light their fire.

Your online appeal needs to tell your story, or at least one aspect of it. A story is about a person, not numbers. It's about attaching meaning and values to what would otherwise be just one thing after another. Show how you change lives. Show how the donor fits in to the story.

People often make the mistake of leaving the human factor out of their request, which makes it easier for people not to give. *People give to people.* Sharing a sense of how individual people are affected creates a better environment for giving and lets potential donors feel that they will make a difference.

You need to humanise your organisation and your work to make it clear why a donor's support is needed, and what their money will help to achieve. You do this by sympathetically setting out the problem, the need that the donor can fill, and the eventual recipients.

On the next page is an example of an appeal that does just that:

Donate a METCARD
By: Asylum Seekers Resource Centre (ASRC)

What is this appeal for?

Help provide asylum seekers with an urgent and practical need by donating a Metcard.

How you can help

There are over 2000 asylum seekers needing to access basic and essential services. Without social security payments, and lacking the right to work, asylum seekers have no income and are unable to pay for public transport. Without transport, they are unable to easily access food, medical and legal aid.

Your donation will buy a METCARD and help people access the basic and essential services to exist. Please help!

Key areas of expenditure for funds donated

- $5 donations will provide a 2 hours travel ticket (for Zone 1& 2)
- $9.40 will give a person the chance to travel all day (Zone 1 & 2)
- $42.60 will provide a week's travel (Zone 1& 2)

Is this appeal tax deductible? Yes

Will I receive a receipt for my donation? Yes, automatically sent to you by email when approved.

This appeal sets out a particular and clearly defined problem, asks for money, and uses the appeal to create a general sympathy towards the Resource Centre's clients. It personalises and humanises the work of the Resource Centre and puts a dollar figure on what a donation will help the group to achieve.

The must-haves

The example given here contains the elements of what every online appeal should contain:

- A brief description of the problem, and why it matters
- A brief account of what your organisation wants to do about it
- An explanation of how the desired donations will make it possible
- A celebration of the difference this will make to people's lives.

Use the points above as a checklist before finalising your appeal.

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Step 2: Get organised within your group

Fundraising is everybody's job. It should never be left to just one person. Fundraising campaigns rest on wide consultation and general involvement from the board/committee down to the volunteer receptionist.

This can't be left to chance, or to ad hoc arrangements that are likely to omit key areas. Taking fundraising seriously requires your group to set up organisational structures to support it.

- Set up a fundraising sub-committee, with the Treasurer as a member to ensure there is a link between the sub-committee and the board.
    - Appoint a fundraising coordinator to chair the sub-committee
    - Appoint a deputy coordinator, to ensure that if one person drops out somebody still knows how to work the system
    - Make sure the coordinator and their deputy know the basics of internet use (but don't let the IT expert take over internet fundraising; expertise in fundraising is more important than expertise in HTML).

- Draw up a fundraising plan for the coming year, including targets and documenting how you plan to reach them. Circulate it for comment and criticism, and have it discussed and signed off on by the board/committee. Your plan should include all your fundraising efforts, not just online fundraising.

- Make fundraising a key issue for your board. Ensure they receive regular reports on how the plan is progressing.

- Educate as many people in the group as possible about online donations (ask them to read this guide) so that they can contribute to the discussions.

Remember, the fundraising coordinator isn't responsible for raising the money, they're responsible for organising everybody else to raise the money. Everyone needs to do their bit.

Step 3: Get your appeal online

Having an online donations facility means that your organisation has a web page through which people can give money to you online, through their credit card.

You'll be given a distinct web address or URL (e.g. **www.givenow.com.au/goodworks**), which will allow you to steer your donors directly to YOUR appeal.

Your appeal will be listed on GiveNow.com.au website. As long as your supporters know your own appeal address, donors can click straight through.

If you have a website of your own you can just tell people to go to there and then when they arrive direct them to "click on this link for secure online donations" and take them to your page. The person who looks after your website should be able to set up such a link very easily.

Whether or not you have a website, in order to get the ability to do online fundraising you will need to set up an online donations facility. This involves four steps:

1) Registering your organisation with GiveNow.com.au. You do this by completing an Organisation Registration form listing your contact details.

2) Sending GiveNow.com.au the details of the particular appeal you want to put online (see Step One of this guide). These details will be used on your appeal page and will give an explanation to the general public as to what you're raising funds for and specifically how the funds will be spent. Your appeal page will also outline how to donate to your organisation by other methods such as phone, fax, post or by leaving a bequest. You will need to complete a new appeal form for each new donation appeal you launch.

3) Signing and returning your Online Donations Agreement, which outlines GiveNow.com.au's responsibilities and those of your organisation.

4) Sending us your Electronic Banking Details so that we can hand on the money we collect on your behalf.

To obtain the forms or to find out further details, see **www.givenow.com.au/receivedonations**

Step 4: Spread the word

If your group had a new phone number, or moved to a new address, it would include these new contact details in all its communications and marketing media. The same should apply for your new donations site. That means you need to include your appeal URL on your

- email signature

- letterhead

- website (if any)

- newsletters and e-newsletters

- brochures

- overheads

- business cards

- flyers

- signage

- posters.

Any material connected to your group should direct the reader either to your website, which will contain a prominent link to your appeal page, or directly to your donations page.

Fundraising campaigns that work well feature their online donations facility in all promotional and campaign information so people know they can donate online.

All the people who have given you money before need to know about this new timesaver. It's certainly worth sending a letter to your past donors (if any), and all those who have supported your group in other ways – as a member, volunteer, sponsor, etc. – to let them know.

You should also issue a media release for your local papers – but make sure you have a news angle. Provide details about your fundraising campaign and, more importantly, what you hope to achieve with it. Ask the reporter to include your web address and telephone number. See **Appendix 1** for more tips on how to do this.

If you're doing a media interview on any topic, mention your website address, or appeal page address, and the fact that you are conducting an appeal. People may want more information about your organisation before they give. Many would prefer to scan a website than ring and actually ask – cater for them all.

If you have a website –

Structure your home page to highlight the link or button that takes people to your online donations area. Put a headline or box at the top of your home page, and a link in your site's News section.

Have a bright, prominent and clickable button on every page that links to the donation facility. Casual visitors should be able to reach that button from anywhere on your site. If someone is reading about your wonderful work they need to be able to reward you at the very moment they're most moved. Use an identical button on each page to allow users to navigate your site more easily. (Whatever you do, make sure your 'donate' button works – check the links.)

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Better still, put a button on your navigation bar so that whatever page your visitor is on they are within easy clicking distance of becoming a donor. Aim to have the facility accessible from any area of the site through one – or, at most, two – mouse clicks. Any more and you risk losing people.

Donate Now!
Using the secure engine of
GiveNow.com.au

<CLICK HERE >

Promote your online giving facility as safe and secure

Some people (though it's a dwindling number) remain hesitant about online giving because of concerns over security so you need to make sure your potential donors are confident their credit card details are safe.

If you have a website, it will need to emphasise the point that the donations facility is "safe" and "secure". Provide a link to this page – **www.givenow.com.au/privacyandsecurity** – which explains to potential donors what security measures the GiveNow.com.au payments scheme has, and what we do to protect donors from issues like credit card fraud.

Ask people to give

It's not enough to tell people about your new online function – you have to **ask them to use it.**

This is the most important step in maximising your success in online donations, and is therefore discussed it separately in the following pages.

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An initiative of the Our Community Foundation – www.ourcommunity.com.au/foundation

Step 5: Ask people to give

It really is important to be upfront about asking people for money. Don't soft-pedal your request. Ensure any buttons or links to your online donations page say 'Donate Here', 'Donate Now' or 'Please Make a Donation'.

Most people don't like asking for things directly. All through our lives, we've all had strong social sanctions inserted in our psyches to stop us begging. Remember, though, you are not a beggar.

- Beggars spend the money they collect on themselves, you spend the money on other people.

- Beggars ask for money without strings; you ask for money with involvement.

- Beggars sell their failure; you sell your success.

It's all in the attitude

If you believe that your group's work is worthwhile and important enough to give freely of your time, money and passion, then you shouldn't mind telling other people about it. Giving to a good cause offers people a chance to become involved with something larger than their own concerns – but they can't get involved in sharing the passion unless you give them an opportunity.

You're not accepting an undeserved gift. You are offering donors something they want. It may be a stronger local football club, fewer children with cancer, a school with enough art supplies, fewer weeds in the waterways, better care for seniors – whatever it is, it's something that makes the world a better place for, among others, the donor.

Don't think of it as taking their money. It's an exchange. You're trying to share what you have – the knowledge that you're making a difference, satisfaction at seeing the world put right just a little, the thrill of being caught up in a movement – everything that's summed up in the words "warm inner glow."

Keep your eye on the prize. Hold on to the knowledge that your group is making a difference to people's lives. Be energised and sustained and inspired by that knowledge.

Then share it.

- Put a request to donate in your newsletter.

- Put a request to donate in your email signature.

- End your talks with a request to donate.

- Have a donations table at your next event.

- Write you your supporters twice a year asking them to donate.

Being able to effectively sell potential donors on the reason you want them to donate can make a big difference to the amount of money you raise.

Tell people what their donations will do

People who donate want to know what their money is going towards – how it will create a benefit or have an impact – and it's no different with online donations.

Make it clear in your material which projects the donations will go towards, and describe what those projects do and how they benefit the community, your members, stakeholders or others. Tell people what you're going to do with the money and why that's so important.

Show people what their donations will do

If possible, include a couple of pictures in your description – either to show who you're helping, or supporting, or the successes that the program has had. (If you're using pictures or information about members or clients, make sure you ask their permission first.)

Tell people what their outcomes will cost

Put a dollar figure on what you do. Take the Asylum Seeker's Resource Centre's lead –

> "Here are some examples of what your donation could help us provide:
> - $5 would enable us to buy a 2 hour Met Ticket so that an asylum seeker could access public transport & visit our centre
> - $10 would enable us to provide food for a week to 5 asylum seekers
> - $20 would enable an asylum seeker in detention to have access to a phone card to call their family overseas
> - $50 would provide free medical care to 10 asylum seekers each week
> - $100 would provide financial aid to 5 asylum seeker families in crisis
> - $200 would fund our Human Rights Law Program for a month
> - $1000 would fund our Material Aid Program for two weeks and provide food to 800 asylum seekers"

Show people how much they're expected to give

On your donations form list the desired amounts, starting at a meaningful figure

- □ $25
- □ $50
- □ $100
- □ $Other _____

Don't beat around the bush

Come right out and say it.

> "To fund this vital program we appeal to you for help. For as little as $10 a month or 32cents a day you can join with me and our dedicated staff to establish a rescue program for the thousands of pets trapped in abusive homes."

Suggest they make a regular credit card donation

GiveNow.com.au allows donors to opt to make a regular donation every month, rather than a one-off donation. Push this option as hard as you can. A continuing credit is the gift that keeps on giving.

When to ask

Any time is a good time to kick off a fundraising appeal, but there are some times that are better than others:

- As tax time approaches each year – around the end of May or the start of June – many people are looking for places to make tax-deductible donations. While this should technically only be a good time for organisations with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status (i.e. those who are allowed by the Tax Office to offer people the option of making tax deductible donations), it's worth all groups launching an appeal around this time when more money for good causes is sloshing around and giving is closer to the tops of people's minds.

- Christmas is another time when goodwill and money for good causes peaks. Plan early to ensure your requests for donations make it out of your office and into people's minds (via their inboxes and letterboxes) in time to get your share.

- Keep your eye out for any special days or events that you can link a fundraising appeal to – you may be able to piggyback on existing media or community attention. If you are an environmentally focussed group, for example, World Environment Day should be a red-letter day for you. If you're a group that works to foster better cultural bonds in the community, think about hooking up with Harmony Day.

Try to have at least two good fundraising pushes every year. Set your dates early in the year and plan well in advance.

Step 6: Use the money as you said you would

Your appeal should have indicated what you planned to do with the donations you received.

Now you have to do what you said you'd do.

The basic element of respect is an honest, transparent, and open relationship with the donor, and this should be a primary aim for all community groups.

This begins by being frank, before the donation is made, about what you intend to spend the money on and then letting donors know afterwards that you've done as you promised. This may sound obvious, but it's important to build a relationship of trust with your donors. Without this you'll have little chance of getting them to repeat or increase their contribution.

Sometimes you might find this very inconvenient indeed, because the things you'll find it easiest to raise money for are not necessarily the things that make up the largest part of your budget (nobody wants to pay for photocopy paper, for example; it didn't feature in the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre list – but they have to pay for it, nonetheless).

That's one of the reasons why it's important to have more than one funding source in your budget. However much trouble it is, though, it's less trouble than being caught out in a (however unintentional) lie.

Major donors – those who contribute a significant amount to your group – should be kept personally informed on a very regular basis about what's happening to their money (and the report should emphasise, if at all possible, the people whose lives have been touched by the expenditure).

Any time you think a donor might have a concern about something, give them a call. If a donor calls you, make it a priority to return their call as soon as possible, and absolutely within 24 hours. If you'll be out of the office for a few days, make sure your voice message directs them to a live person.

Step 7: Say thanks

The two most important words in fundraising are 'Thank you' – not only because it's the right thing to do, but also because unless you do say thanks promptly and sincerely it's unlikely your donor is going to contribute again.

You must send a thank-you letter for any donation. Send it promptly – as soon as you receive the donation.

Hand-sign your thank-you letters. If the donation is larger than $20, personalise it. If it's larger than $100, send it with a handwritten note at the bottom and an invitation to one of your events. Make the donor feel good.

Wherever possible, personalise the acknowledgement letter, addressing it to the donor by name, and tailoring it to their situation; which can these days be done very easily through the mail merge function in software such as Microsoft Word.

Make the donor feel that they have entered into a rewarding relationship with people who appreciate them. Entice them to come back.

When you're saying thanks, don't ask for money at the same time. Now isn't the moment.

Dear Mr. Chalmers,

Thanks very much for your donation to the Tuvaluan Cricket Tournament Appeal.

With 50 players participating, and up to 30 out in the field at the same time (with two simultaneous matches), we need a truly scary number of uniforms – and your $50 will cover the full cost of a jacket, a T-shirt in the club colours, and a traditional Tuvaluan wraparound, fully fitting out one Youth Club Member for healthy sport in a sporting community.

We very much hope you can come along for the day on 24 May at the GoodTown Community Oval to see your champion team demonstrate their match-winning form.

Here's to the first Tuvaluan in the Australian National Team!

Mai Paul,
Secretary

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Step 8: Check what's working and change what's not

The fundraising sub-committee should review your organisation's fundraising plan at least once a year

- to evaluate performance against budget

- to incorporate new experience and user feedback

- to fix bugs and remove glitches

- to brainstorm new ideas

- to set fundraising goals for the coming year.

Never lie to your budget. Budget realistically, and run your spreadsheet several times, building in different assumptions to see what effect different circumstances would have. If done properly, this will alert you to possible areas of concern – and the areas that you will need to concentrate on.

Test new approaches frequently. The advantage of internet sites is that they're easy to alter – try out different versions and see which one attracts more donations.

If you're doing a mail-out, send two versions of your letter, and check to see which one has the best response.

Evolve – let successful variants flourish while unsuccessful ways of asking go extinct.

If you can manage it, run your promotions past a focus group to see whether they stir the right emotions. Brainstorm for new insights. Experiment. Innovate.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who administers the Giving Centre?

The Giving Centre is provided by Our Community (which oversees the GiveNow.com.au giving service). To find out more about Our Community and GiveNow.com.au visit **www.ourcommunity.com.au** or **www.givenow.com.au**

2. Why is the service free? Is there a catch?

It is true – there is no catch, you do not need to give us a single cent to become amember organisation that is listed for online donations.

GiveNow.com.au is operated by Our Community's foundation – it's part of our mission to give back to the sector that we are trying to support.

Through GiveNow.com.au we are working to democratise online donations in Australia – ensuring that even the tiniest community groups have the same access to safe, secure online donations technology as the largest groups. It is our belief that these small, often highly localised community groups are every bit as important to community life as the larger ones, and that they should be supported by their communities.

GiveNow.com.au is non-exclusive, non-binding and fee-free. What we do get out of it is the development of ourcommunity.com.au as the best online resource available for community organisations such as yourselves.

3. So what are the TOTAL costs of getting involved?

Membership costs =	$0
Online Donations start up costs =	$0
Online Donations commission =	0%
Online Donations credit card fees =	1.228% for Visa/Mastercard, 1.43% for American Express cards.[1] This fee is taken by the credit card companies, not by GiveNow.com.au. The fee is deducted from the donations you receive. You do not need to pay a cent.

Our Community does offer low-priced products (such as newsletters) to the community sector, but these are ABSOLUTELY at your discretion. You do not now, or ever, need to purchase anything from us to receive donations online through GiveNow.com.au.

4. Do I need my own website?

Not necessarily. While having your own website is preferable, you can still use the Giving Centre even if you haven't. You will be provided with your own URL (e.g:

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[1] Correct at time of writing. Please check the website (**www.givenow.com.au**) for updates.

www.givenow.com.au/goodworks), which will take donors straight to your own appeal page without having to go through the main Giving Centre entry point.

5. Why get involved with online donations?

A few important statistics:

- British comedy fundraiser Comic Relief raised £16 million (more than $A33.2) online in a six-hour period during its March 2009 appeal. This compared to raising just £5.25 million ($A10.8 million) in 2001.

- The US Red Cross has found that online donors give on average $US127 ($A180), compared to $US22 ($A31) via traditional mail-ins.

- A US study by The Social Initiative showed that online donations had grown from just $10m ($A14.2 million) online in 1999 to $250 million ($A355 million) in 2000 and $5 billion ($A7.1 billion) in 2006.

- American online donation organisations have recorded growth in online donations as being between 33% and 50% since 2006.

- Community Groups listed on GiveNow.com.au (formerly known as the Australian Giving Centre) raised more than **$10 million** in the first eight years of the centre's operations. The annual giving figure has grown markedly every year .

6. Who else is using the online donations facility?

More than 1000 community groups use the GiveNow.com.au donations service.

The online donations services operated by GiveNow.com.au are open to the whole range of community groups. We service smaller groups such as TheatreWorks and Edgar's Mission through to much larger organisations such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the National Heart Foundation. Listed groups com from every corner of the community sector – schools, CFA branches, charities, sports clubs, self-help groups – they're all there.

Have a look who has already signed up by visiting **www.givenow.com.au** or contact us if you would like to speak to a referee from an organisation with an existing listing with GiveNow.com.au.

7. Who owns the donor details?

You do. We collect the donor details so that we can process your donations properly, but we are never allowed to use this data without your consent.

8. Who issues the receipts?

We are able to issue receipts on your behalf. We do this in email form immediately after the donation has been accepted.

However, you can choose to do the receipting yourself after we send the donor details through at the end of each month. Please advise us when you send in your agreement which alternative you prefer.

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9. Can we offer donors a tax deduction for their donation?

If your organisation is an ATO-approved Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR), the receipt will entitle them to a tax deduction. If you don't know if your group has DGR status, visit **http://www.ato.gov.au/nonprofit/** and follow the links.

10. When and how do we receive our donations?

At the end of each month GiveNow.com.au transfers to your account the total of all donations collected, less the credit card fees.

You'll receive an email notifying you of this as soon as the transfer has been made, and this will include an Excel spreadsheet containing the full details of your donors.

11. Who will give to my group?

A few people who come to the Giving Centre without a particular group in mind may give to your organisation. Most of your donors, however, will be people who already know you, and the bulk of those people will be those you have sent there by recommendations printed in your promotional material or attached to links on your website.

12. What donations can my group expect to receive?

The largest single donation ever received through the GiveNow.com.au donations service was $100,000, the smallest was $5.

The Giving Centre helps those who help themselves so you can expect whatever you can induce your donors to give, so you will only get donations if you ask people to give!Donors also have the option of making a regular donation that's automatically deducted from their credit card once a month. Hundreds of donors have taken up this option and now make a monthly contribution to a group of their choice.

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Checklist

The key to increased donations is marketing (both offline and online). The organisations that have had the most success with online donations:

- Have well-oiled administrative machines that support and shape the fundraising campaigns
    - *Set up a fundraising sub-committee*
    - *Appoint a fundraising coordinator*
    - *Draw up a fundraising plan and set targets*
    - *Ensure fundraising is a regular item on your board/committee's agenda*
- Have well-crafted appeals
    - *Ensure your appeal includes brief description of the problem, and why it matters*
    - *Ensure your appeal includes a brief account of what your organisation wants to do about it*
    - *Ensure your appeal includes an explanation of how the desired donations will make it possible*
    - *Ensure your appeal includes a celebration of the difference this will make to people's lives*
- Set up an online donations facility
    - *Register your organisation to receive online donations*
- Have well-established marketing channels (newsletters, mail-outs, events) to communicate with members and supporters about the giving campaign
    - *Announce and then advertise online donations in your newsletter*
    - *Mail out information on online giving to your supporters*
    - *Bring along an appeal flyer to all of our events*
- Have a well-designed website to back up your other marketing channels
    - *Set up a website*
    - *Provide a prominent 'donate' button on your homepage and every other page possible*
    - *Review your website for ease of use and speed of donation*
    - *Check to make sure your links work*
- Highlight the ability to collect online donations in all their communications and promote online donations everywhere
    - *Put your URL on your email signature*
    - *Put your URL on your letterhead*
    - *Put your URL on your website*
    - *Put your URL on your newsletters (hard copy and email versions)*

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- o *Put your URL on your brochures/flyers*

- o *Put your URL on your overheads/PowerPoint template*

- o *Put your URL on your business cards*

- o *Put your URL on your signage, posters, etc.*

- Ask people to give

  - o *Make sure the links to your online appeal are accompanied by a clear call for people to give, explaining what their donation will help to achieve*

  - o *Consider putting a dollar value on different aspects of what your group does, showing what a (say) $25 donation would achieve, a $50 donation, and a $100 donation*

  - o *Hold a fundraising drive at least twice a year. Plan them well in advance.*

- Ensure people know their details are safe and secure

  - o *Use the words "safe" and "secure" when you talk about your online appeal.*

  - o *Explain how donors' details are protected or provide a link to this page www.givenow.com.au/privacyandsecurity*

- Give thanks (and receipts) as quickly as possible

  - o *Ensure you reply to donors' queries (email, telephone or postal) within one business day (even if it's just to say you're investigating and will contact them again later)*

  - o *Discuss which ways are most appropriate for your group to thank your donors – Personalised letters? Phone calls? Listing donors' names on the website, in your newsletter, in your annual report? Public acknowledgement during speeches/media appearances? Names printed on a plaque, on your furniture, on a brick, on your walls?*

- Involve donors in a continuing relationship

  - o *Ask donors if they would like to be added to your newsletter list*

  - o *Add donors' names to your invitation lists for events*

- Review strategies regularly against agreed targets

  - o *Arrange for the board/committee to review the sub-committee's fundraising plan*

  - o *Ensure the plan is reviewed at various times of the year (set timelines when you formulate your plan)*

- View the online donations facility as just one part of an integrated fundraising strategy, rather than a standalone.

  - o *Visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding and find out what other fundraising methods you could be using*

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Appendix 1 – Media Release Template

On the next page is a basic template designed to help you put a simple media release together. If you follow the template and put in the relevant information to make it specific to your organisation you will be well on the way to getting the word out there.

1. If you have letterhead or a logo, use it at the top of the press release. It adds credibility and identity.

2. Add in the date your release is going out.

3. Wherever it says (**your organisation's name)**, delete and replace with the name of your group.

4. Insert a paragraph describing your group and explaining what your goals and missions are – a positive statement of why people should support your appeal.

5. Use a spokesperson – your chair, president, fundraising committee chief.

6. Write a paragraph that names your appeal and describes exactly where the money would go. People want to know how the money will be used.

7. Your spokesperson can expand more on the services the appeal will help fund.

8. If you have your own website, point to that, and then have a link that goes straight through to your online donations page. If you don't have your own website, add the exact web page address of your online donations page (e.g. **www.givenow.com.au/goodworks**).

9. Add the name of your spokesperson and relevant home, work and mobile numbers.

10. Check the spelling.

11. Test the webpage address you have provided to make sure it's the right one.

12. Check to make sure that you've deleted all the notes in the template.

13. Send to all relevant local and specialist or trade media organisations that might be interested in your group or have reported on your group before.

14. If you have had any radio interviews or local press, ring the journalists/producers/editors you dealt with and ask if they are interested in doing a story on your new online donations service.

15. Ring the other local media after you've sent the release and check to see if they are going to use it, or if they want any further information.

16. In any follow-up media stories ask the reporter if they can mention that your appeal is still open and repeat the webpage address where people can donate online.

17. Run something in your own organisation's newsletters/magazines and marketing materials and ensure that the online donations address is included in all future correspondence or at the bottom of future press releases.

18. It's only a template. Organisations that have more experience with the media should try to make it a bit more newsworthy with a more striking line to grab media attention.

19. Good luck! The more people who know they can donate to you, the more chance of eliciting donations for your cause.

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For more information on writing and sending a media release, including a list of media contacts, visit the online Media, Marketing and Post Centre: **www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapost.**

Media Release
Date goes here
For immediate release

(Your organisation's name) ANNOUNCES NEW ONLINE DONATIONS FACILITY

People wanting to donate to **(Your organisation's name)** can now do so online with the announcement today of a new online donations facility.

The new 24-hour-day, seven-day-a-week service ensures that people can donate to **(Your organisation's name)** at any time of the day or night.

(Your organisation's name) is collecting the donations through the free online donations service powered by GiveNow.com.au.

The online donations service is totally secure and ensures that 100 per cent of the donation goes straight to **(Your organisation's name)**. Only credit card fees are deducted from the donation.

(Write here a paragraph describing your organisation and its background and current mission).

The CEO of **(Your organisation's name), (CEO's name)** said **he/she** hoped the new donations service would attract new supporters to the service and provide an option for current supporters to give immediate financial support.

(Insert here a paragraph describing exactly what the appeal money will go towards i.e. to fund wheelchair access at the local stadium.)

"Include here a quote from your spokesperson expanding on why it is important that you raise the money,'' the spokesperson said.

"If necessary, include another quote from your spokesperson saying people can make a difference no matter the size of their gift."

People wanting to donate to **(your organisation's name)** can either visit our website at **(your organisation's website address)** and click on the 'Donate Now' button or go straight to the special online donations page site at **(add your link)** and follow the prompts.

For more information on (your organisation)'s fundraising appeal and the online donations service call (your organisation's spokesperson) on (add phone numbers and email address).

An initiative of the Our Community Foundation – www.ourcommunity.com.au/foundation

Appendix 2 – Designing an Eye-catching Fundraising Page

According to a Canadian study, websites have just one-twentieth of a second to impress visitors. People make up their minds about whether a website is useful in just 50 milliseconds. When you consider the average blink lasts for between 100 and 150 milliseconds, it can be safely said that people decide on a website quicker than the blink of an eye.

Whether your group looks after your site itself, or uses the knowledge of someone you know – a friend, or a business you might be supported by or in partnership with – there are some basic steps you can take to make your fundraising webpage more eye-catching.

(1) – Making Your Homepage a Winner

The **Marketing, Media and Post Centre** (**www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapost**) – a joint initiative of Our Community and Australia Post – contains a number of free help sheets on marketing your group online, including some on making your website readable and attractive.

Tips for a winning fundraising page:
- Avoid slabs of text without breaks
- Use different point sizes and font colours – as well as bold lettering – for headings to give the page some order and help break up the text
- Use photos/graphics to break up the text (but sparingly – don't give overboard; too many will make your pages distracting and hard to download)
- Don't be afraid of white space – instead of cramming everything in, leave space around elements of your page to let it breathe and to make it easier to read
- To help readability, have a good contrast between the writing colour and the background colour (e.g. dark text on a light background)
- Use a simple, easy to read font that is big enough for people to read
- Don't have too many flashing, blinking or moving buttons or graphics – they look tacky and create too many distractions
- Brand your fundraising page as your own – make sure your logo features prominently, and that the basic layout and colour scheme of the page is similar to that on your home page and other parts of your website

One of the most important parts of a good homepage is its accessibility. Two websites where you can find out more about this are:

- The **Australian Government Information Management Office** (**www.agimo.gov.au/practice/mws/accessibility**) guidelines to minimum website accessibility standards.

- Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission **Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes** (**www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html**).

Once your homepage is up to speed the next step is to ensure there are good clear links to your fundraising page.

(2) – Linking From Homepage to Fundraising Page

If people can't find a link from your homepage to your fundraising page, it may as well not exist. Your group has to examine its homepage and find the right spot for the link.

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The obvious choice for many is to position the link front and centre – near the top of the page and in the centre of the screen. This will usually draw the most attention to the link. But wherever the link to your fundraising page is, it should be:

- Prominent enough to draw the eye, but not so jarring as to cheapen or detract from your homepage's content.

- Clearly defined so site visitors know what the link is and where it goes. (Label your button 'Donate Now' or 'Find Out How You Can Help'.)

Go to **www.givenow.com.au**, browse through some of the appeals and follow the links to their websites to see how other groups do it.

(3) – Write your Fundraising Page Text

Kick off your fundraising page with some general statements reminding people who you are, what you do, who you help or work with and how your fundraising aids what you do.

It doesn't have to be a repeat of the information on your "About Us" page; it can instead be a shorter summary geared especially at the fundraising or donations side of your activities.

From there you can launch into descriptions of your fundraising activities or appeals. The description of each activity or appeal should include:

- **How** you will raise or collect funds – an appeal, activities, or other events

- **Why** you're raising money

- **When** you will be doing so – so people know when your appeal or event is

- **Where** the event, appeal or activity will be

- **What** people can give – money, goods or other items

Also mention any fundraising targets you might have.

It's important these explanations are clear and concise. People need to know this information, but don't want to spend a long time reading about it.

Your fundraising page should also include details of how people can give. Again, this should be written clearly, and each giving method should be outlined concisely with easy-to-follow instructions. For example:

Give to Goodworks Foundation

You can give to the Goodworks Foundation in a number of ways:
- **In Person** -   1234 Smith St, Bloggsville, 3333.
- **By Phone** –   9999 0000 (have credit card details ready)
- **By Mail** –   Goodworks Foundation Donations, PO Box 5555 Bloggsville, 3333 (cheques and mail order accepted).
- **Online** –   Go to our secure donations site at **www.givenow.com.au/goodworks**

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(4) – Get Another Opinion

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Get a couple of opinions before your fundraising page goes live. Ask people who have nothing to do with your fundraising and nothing to do with your group to roadtest the page and make sure it works for them. Ask them if they think it would compel them to donate.

Importantly, make sure all your links work.