

Our Community **MATTERS**

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Resources, News, Innovations and Tips on:

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www.ourcommunity.com.au

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I. Community View: Have your say on who will be this year's Community Idol!



By Rhonda Galbally AO
CEO

There are just over three weeks to go until Communities in Control 2008 kicks off at Moonee Ponds in Melbourne.

This year's conference on 16 and 17 June will feature more than a dozen inspirational speakers, including environmental warrior Tim Flannery, CEO of indigenous TV Pat Turner, Amnesty International leader Kate Gilmore, and many more. Plus there's a pre-conference skills development day on Working with Government, which will be held on Sunday, June 15.

There are still tickets available but get in before the last-minute rush by going to www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic2008 or calling (03) 9320 6800.

One of the key events during this year's conference will be the crowning of the 2008 Westpac Australian Community Idol.

This year's finalists will be interviewed on stage on June 16 by **The Chaser's Julian Morrow**, with audience members to vote on their favourite, and the winner to be announced by world-renowned singer **Renée Geyer** on June 17. It's an event not to be missed!

After a challenging short-listing and selection process, three finalists have now been selected.

► Blyth Regional Cinema Inc.

The small community of Blyth in rural South Australia was sick of hearing talk about "destructive and vandalising youth" in rural areas; they decided to "have a crack at trying to do something about their boredom".

Their answer was the development of a community-operated cinema.

Three years on, the cinema has become an integral part of the local social scene, and the flow-on effects for the town have been phenomenal: The cinema regularly hosts other non-profit groups for movie nights that serve as a fundraiser for both the group and the cinema; it has developed a prospectus that details a package of attractions in Blyth which has



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been distributed to clubs and bus companies; it is attracting more visitors to the town and thereby creating an economic boost for local shops; it's created work experience opportunities for local youth who volunteer in the candy bar; it even acts as a very effective "baby sitter," screening G or PG rated films when local clubs are holding adults' functions in town!

Movie-goers at Blyth are treated to a PowerPoint slide show before each screening on various topics of local or general interest (weddings, social events, historical facts, farming issues, etc.), with the 'newsreel' being regularly refreshed.

"In the early days we received a lot of negative feedback, from 'Good luck, you'll need it!', to 'It will never work!'"

"This has proved a major success with our patrons," the organisation says. "Although time-consuming to change every six weeks or so, it allows all ages to gain an insight into days past, and brings tiny box brownie photos out of hidden albums and onto the big screen."

Blyth Regional Cinema Inc. is proud to have developed a facility that compares favourably with the city and is available for screenings every weekend.

"We went out of our way to ensure our cinema was to a city standard, from toilets to sound to seating to colour schemes," the organisation says.

And though it's only three years old, the cinema has an eye to the future, investing profits to allow for future digital and seating upgrades and maintenance.

"We love what we do, and enjoy seeing other people reacting with joy, sorrow and all the other emotions movies bring to our visitors."

► Consumer Activity Network (Mental Health) Inc.

If it's Communities in Control that you want to see, then you can't look past Sydney-based group CAN (Mental Health).

Consumer involvement and direction is not only at this organisation's core, but is apparent in everything it does. The group's board consists entirely of people living with mental illness. It encourages feedback on the services and recovery activities it provides. Its website includes a "Your Say Counts" section in which consumers' views are sought on issues such as smoke-free psychiatric inpatient units. It holds a monthly "Share & Air" luncheon to encourage and enable consumers to educate each other on the issues and ideas they're interested in – many of which then become incorporated into the organisation's activities.

"Consumers can and do recover and contribute to the very fabric of Australian society."

In fact, CAN (Mental Health) is one of only a handful of organisations Australia-wide that have managed to maintain a fiercely protected consumer focus while also reaching out to ensure that its knowledge is carried out into the wider community.

The organisation provides training to other organisations – but, as the organisation explains, "We're in the business of enabling and increasing the capacity of consumers to have their say and be heard. In other words, CAN will refuse to provide training on a contract basis to any organisation that is

not prepared to support and encourage mental health consumers to be empowered to raise their voices at all levels of the organisation."

The organisation's core philosophy is "We CAN. We CARE. We Have a GO." And it certainly is doing that!

Among the group's current programs are a Community Connections suicide prevention project, involving national telephone and "hospital to home" peer support, running of the Pitane Recovery Centre – the first and only consumer-run recovery centre in metropolitan Sydney – and a small 'Busting Out of the Welfare & Poverty Cycle' project.

"The organisation believes that having a go is far more important, even if things don't always turn out the way expected, than sitting and waiting for things to happen and be done for us," the organisation says.

"Consumers can and do recover and contribute to the very fabric of Australian society."

It's groups like CAN (Mental Health) that are helping them to do so.

► RSPCA ACT

One in four victims of domestic violence delays seeking help because they don't want to put their pet's safety at risk. It's a startling statistic, and one that RSPCA ACT is working hard to reverse.

The organisation has put in place a free emergency pet foster care program for the victims of domestic violence. "As women and children experiencing domestic violence are very close to their pets, the program allows victims to leave their beloved companions with the RSPCA at no charge for as long as it takes for them to get out of the violent situation," the organisation says.

This is just one of many examples of why RSPCA ACT has become a leading light in the Australian community sector. Whether you're looking at fundraising, governance, inclusion practices or programs, it's hard to miss this group's innovation, drive and commitment to excellence.

Another key initiative run by the organisation is an early intervention program that aims to break the cycle of violence in youths who are violent towards animals. "Animal cruelty is often a sign of serious psychological distress which can indicate that a child has either experienced violence first-hand or is at risk of becoming violent towards people," the organisation says. "By using early intervention tools such as the Humane Education Program, children develop empathy for animals and other human beings and the cycle of violence can be avoided."

A stand-out feature of this organisation is its willingness to stick its head above the parapet, a fact demonstrated starkly during the recent debate in the ACT over a planned kangaroo cull on Defence Department land. "Despite criticism of RSPCA ACT for our position (to **not** oppose the cull of kangaroos) we remained strong and committed to our cause."

The group is also breaking ground in its challenging of traditional animal sheltering rules. "Historically animal shelters would euthanase 40% of dogs and 70% of cats, stating that no space existed or that it was too hard to find homes," the organisation says. "We home 93% of dogs and 70% of domestic cats." How have they done it? Again, by thinking outside the box – by engaging skilled dog behaviour trainers, revising outmoded policies, creating a quarantine area for sick cats, and putting in place an active foster care program for kittens.

RSPCA ACT has been around now since 1955. Who says you can't teach an old organisation new tricks?

Commendations

The number and standard of applications this year was so high, the judges decided to award 12 commendations this year instead of 10. Many more groups could have been included in the list.

Thanks to the judges who did such a great job, and congratulations to the following groups, all of which will be awarded certificates to mark their recognition as leaders among community groups in Australia:

- Alzheimer's Australia NT
- Arts Council of Mansfield Inc., VIC
- BEST Community Development, VIC
- Can Assist: Cancer Assistance Network, NSW
- Milang Old School House Community Centre, SA
- Redland District Committee on the Ageing Inc., QLD
- Righteous Pups Australia (RPA), VIC
- Sudan's Bor Youth Association of Australia Inc., VIC
- Sunshine Heights Cricket Club, VIC
- Teddy Love Club, SA
- The Red Room Company, NSW
- Western Chances, VIC

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2. New resources at www.ourcommunity.com.au

One of the most common requests for information that we get at Our Community is from people wanting to know how to raise money to send someone to an interstate or international sporting, arts or academic event.

You know the idea – someone gets chosen to represent the school or the district or the state or the country at a prestigious event, but no one has the funds to actually get them there.

Raising money to send amateur individuals or teams away to events – musical, sporting or otherwise – is not easy. There's no quick fix; no magic pool of funds that you can dip into to get you on your way.

To help people think through the process of raising funds for things like this, we've prepared a new help sheet. It's a handy reference for anyone wanting to know how to raise funds for a one-off need (as well as those – such as council officers – who also receive this request from time to time).

If you have any further suggestions you think we should include, please let us know by emailing kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au.

The help sheet is in the Community Funding Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/oneoff – and don't forget all the other help sheets and resources for community groups in the Funding Centre. Explore what's available by clicking on the button to the right.



Site index

Another new feature on the Our Community website is a site index. This lists every resource available from Our Community via the website – help sheets, sample policies, links, listings, giving options, newsletters, books, and much more.

There are more than 1200 items listed alphabetically in the index, which you can search by clicking "Ctrl + F" once you're on the page. It's at www.ourcommunity.com.au/index, or can be accessed by clicking the text link marked 'Site Index' on the left-hand side towards the top of every page of the Our Community site.

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3. Web 2.0 at a glance

Another new help sheet posted on the Our Community website is designed to help guide community groups through the rapidly emerging world of "Web 2.0" – the so-called second generation of the internet.

The help sheet – posted in the Community Technology Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/tech – provides a brief rundown of what all those new terms mean. The text is reproduced below:

- ▶ **Blogs:** Short for 'weblogs', blogs are online journals where bloggers enter ideas as they occur to them. Bloggers can allow comments, or not, and can screen those comments, or not. Blogs are not a cutting-edge technology anymore, but they are (at least the ones that allow comments) the place where the conversation has emerged in its most developed form. Have a look at [GiveWell blog](#) or [White Courtesy Telephone](#) or [Tactical Philanthropy](#).
- ▶ **Wiki:** a type of computer software that allows users to easily create, edit and [link](#) webpages. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites or to power community websites, and are increasingly being installed by not-for-profits to provide affordable and effective intranets to manage their accumulated knowledge. One of the best-known Wikis is [Wikipedia](#). The unique selling point of Wikis like Wikipedia is that anybody can add to them or correct mistakes, and that means they expand to cover the areas people are prepared to contribute to. The downside is that people with strong opinions about particular content can have a malign influence, and there does need to be a review system of some kind.
- ▶ **RSS:** Really Simple Syndication is a family of [web feed](#) formats used to publish frequently updated content such as [blog](#) entries, news headlines or [podcasts](#). An RSS document, which is called a 'feed,' 'web feed,' or 'channel,' contains either a summary of content from an associated website or the full text. RSS makes it possible for people to keep up with their favourite websites in an automated manner that's easier than checking them manually. If you update your site frequently, you should make provision for an RSS feed.
- ▶ **Flickr:** This is a photo-sharing website and web services suite, and one of the earliest [Web 2.0](#) applications. In addition to being a popular website for users to share personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers as a photo repository. Its popularity has been fuelled by its innovative tools that allow photos to be tagged and browsed. It now has online a stunning 2 billion images. If your organisation wants to get the pictures in your annual report out to a wider potential audience, here's how.
- ▶ **Podcasts:** Podcasts are digital media files – audio or video – distributed over the internet for playback on portable media players (including, increasingly, mobile phones) or personal computers. They are in the process of converting the ephemeral catch-it-while-it's-on-or-miss-out media of radio and TV into permanent resource banks.

► **YouTube:** A video sharing website where users can upload, view and share video clips, including movie and TV clips, music videos, and amateur content such as [videoblogging](#) and short original videos. Users can post video 'responses' and subscribe to content feeds.

► **Social Networking Sites:** [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Myspace](#) are examples of social networking sites. By connecting people through their common interests, the social web has the potential to mobilise concerned citizens to create substantial change when it is used in a simple, accessible, meaningful and human way. MySpace [Impact](#) is an attempt to provide a portal for not-for-profit group activity featuring news, videos and events, and there's an application called [Causes](#) attached to Facebook that enables you to conduct advocacy and fundraising. These sites are still evolving rapidly, and their eventual potential is hard to assess – but see, for example, [Change.org](#), which is MySpace for the not-for-profit sector. First, the user profiles him or herself. Then, as a classic social networking site, it starts to show relationships: how many people you have recruited to the issues or causes you care about. You provide information on the changes you want to see. The issues are listed in order of the size of the community that is working on the issue.

- Information sourced largely from [Wikipedia](#).

And if you want to see how it all works out in practice, there's an interesting article on community groups and the new technologies [here](#).

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4. Federal Budget wrap: new grants opportunities unveiled

Community sector leaders have indicated a generally positive response to the Federal Government's May budget.

The Federal Budget brought with it a myriad of funding announcements, proposed and planned changes to the law, as well as some funding cuts relevant to the sector.

A large number of new funding and grants programs aimed at community groups, not-for-profits, schools and local councils were announced in the Federal Budget.

A full rundown of Federal Budget funding announcements is included in this month's EasyGrants newsletter ([click here](#) to find out more or subscribe). They include:

- A new \$2.2 billion Caring for our Country program, which will bring together the existing Natural Heritage Trust, National Landcare, Environmental Stewardship and Working on Country programs.
- The new Helping Seniors Make Ends Meet program will provide \$15 million over three years to fund grants of up to \$10,000 to help community organisations to purchase desktop computers and broadband connections in order to run free internet workshops for seniors and provide them with free access to the internet.
- A \$5 million, four-year Mentoring for our Students program, which will offer grants of up to \$50,000 each year to 25 communities on a competitive basis to establish a pilot mentoring program involving semi-retired or recently retired people from the workforce passing on their skills to students.
- Almost \$100 million over four years under the Skilling Australia program to provide grants of up to \$10,000 to schools to enable Year 9-12 students engaged in vocational education and training to participate in on-the-job training one day a week for 20 weeks a year.
- A National Secondary School Computer Fund under the \$1 billion Digital Education Revolution plan to provide grants of up to \$1 million to eligible secondary schools to assist them in providing new or upgraded computers and communications technology to students in Years 9 to 12.
- Local governments will be able to apply for money under the \$1 billion National Urban Water and Desalination Plan, which funds desalination, water recycling and storm water harvesting projects in Australian cities with populations of over 50,000.
- The new Volunteer Grants program will be bolstered by an extra \$15 million over three years to assist volunteers to undertake community activities. The program combines the Volunteer Small Equipment and Sporting Equipment Grants. From July 1, the Government will expand items eligible for funding under the program to include petrol vouchers for volunteers who use their vehicle for volunteering purposes.
- Almost \$13 million will go towards grants to 190 schools so they can fund a pilot Kitchen Garden Program based on the successful Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, which aims to curb obesity by encouraging healthy eating and shows children in Grades 3 to 6 how to grow, harvest and cook produce.

- Grassroots soccer clubs will benefit from grants under a \$16 million Government contribution to the Football Federation of Australia in the coming two years.
- The Government will provide \$6.4 million over four years to provide grants to junior athletes to participate in significant or specialist sporting events which involve travel of more than 250 kilometres.
- The Australia Council will distribute \$5.2 million over the next four years under the Artists in Residence Education Initiative which will fund individual professional artists and arts organisations to develop and deliver arts learning experiences through in-school residencies.
- \$10 million over four years will be contributed towards a new Creative Communities Program. Part of the program will see grants provided to regional community arts organisations and projects to improve opportunities for Australians to participate in community-based arts and cultural activities.

Keep your eye on [EasyGrants](#) for further details as the planned programs start to come on-stream.

While the Federal Budget contained a good deal of positive funding news, there have also been some programs cut or reduced.

In an illustration of the problems a changeover in government can cause organisations in the community, palliative care hospice Fernlea House – located Melbourne’s outer eastern suburbs – says it is facing closure after the Rudd Government decided against continuing a pilot program the previous Howard Government had funded at the centre.

Fernlea faces a black hole of almost \$350,000 after the Rudd Government decided against further funding.

Staff, families and those who use the service are shattered by the decision and have vowed to fight it.

The Government has also axed the long-running (but controversial) Regional Partnerships Program. Both the Regional Partnerships and Sustainable Regions programs are to be replaced by two new programs – a \$176 million Better Regions program the government says is aimed at revitalising and improving regional area infrastructure and transport to encourage economic and community development, and the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure program.

In addition, a mooted Regional Development Australia network is set to fund projects in rural areas.

The budget confirmed that the popular Community Water Grants program – part of the Australian Government Water Fund – had also been given the chop, while the Government has also abolished the former Howard Government’s Community Business Partnership, a program designed to encourage more effective corporate responsibility. The Rudd Government says it will look to other groups for advice on CR. As a starting point it has commissioned St James Ethics Centre to undertake a three-year project to expand responsible business practice nationally.

“The budget confirmed that the popular Community Water Grants program – part of the Australian Government Water Fund – had also been given the chop.”



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Sadly, the Federal Government has also confirmed that it will not proceed with a mooted package of GST changes for charities and other not-for-profits announced by the previous Howard Government.

In justifying the decision, the Government said the changes “would not have been effective in improving integrity, certainty or in reducing regulatory compliance costs for the sector as a whole”.

The Government has also confirmed it will legislate guidelines to improve the integrity of prescribed private funds (PPFs), coming into effect from the start of July next year.

It says the measure will “provide the trustees of PPFs with greater certainty as to their philanthropic obligations by amending and legislating the PPF guidelines, including ensuring regular valuation of assets at market rates, to increase the size of compulsory distributions and to give the ATO greater regulatory powers”.

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5. New giving figures released: how generous is your local area?

Have you ever wondered if your suburb or town is pulling its weight when it comes to giving?

A new tool and report from the Queensland University of Technology’s Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies (CPNS) should give you some clues.

The Centre’s new Deductible Gifts by Postcode tool (www.bus.qut.edu.au/research/cpns/postcode.php) allows people to view postcode-specific tax-deductible giving figures, as gathered from an analysis of 2005-06 individual income tax returns.

The tool shows, for example, that the NSW postcode of 2027 – covering Darling Point, Edgecliff, HMAS Rushcutters and Point Piper – topped the list of tax-deductible gifts, claiming just over \$27 million. Close behind this postcode was Victoria 3142, covering Toorak and Hawkburn, where residents claimed more than \$23 million in tax-deductible gifts.

The complementary report, *Tax Deductible Giving in 2005-06*, analyses Tax Office statistics on tax-deductible donations made by Australians during the 2005-06 financial year.

Among its findings were:

- A 5.7% increase in the total amount Australians donated to Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) organisations (and then claimed as tax-deductible donations). In 2005-06 the figure was \$1.55 billion, compared to \$1.47 billion the previous financial year. This figure of \$1.55 billion represented 5.8% of all personal taxpayer deductions.
- A greater percentage of an individual’s taxable income is being gifted. On average those individual taxpayers who make tax-deductible donations to DGRs donate approximately 0.34% of their taxable income.
- A greater percentage of females (but a greater number of males) made and claimed tax-deductible donations to DGRs. In 2005-06, a total of 2.2 million males (or 36% of male Australian taxpayers) made and claimed tax-deductible donations to DGRs of \$938 million. A total of 2 million females (or 37% of female Australian taxpayers) made and claimed tax-deductible donations to DGRs, totalling \$618 million.
- The average tax-deductible donation made and claimed now stands at around \$371, a figure which has more than doubled in the past decade. However, fewer Australian taxpayers are actually making donations to DGRs (down from 4.3 million in 2004-05 to 4.2 million in 2005-06).

Bear in mind when pondering these statistics that not all donations that are made to not-for-profit organisations go to eligible DGRs – only around 20,000 of Australia’s 700,000 community groups qualify, an appalling statistic – and not all donations made to DGRs are claimed as tax-deductible donations come tax time.

An executive summary of the CPNS report is available via the QUT website or by [clicking here](#).

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6. IDEAS YOU CAN STEAL: Use it or Lose it!

One of the finalists for the first-ever Community Idol competition, CERES Environmental Park, has come up with a great idea for making money while spreading the word about its work and its values.

CERES, which aims to encourage community participation in environmental sustainability and social equity in urban areas, provides what it describes as “a first-class, eco-friendly catering service”.

“Picture yourself enjoying the finest organic wines and food in Melbourne at the urban oasis that is CERES,” the organisation’s marketing material says.

“Plan a beautiful wedding in our Market Gardens, or have your next event on the Village Green or at our Café Marquee. Whatever outdoor venue you choose, we believe CERES’ enchanting setting and stunning atmosphere will leave you with fantastic memories.”

While not all groups will have the sort of space that’s suitable to host functions, nor the capacity for catering, the principle to be taken from this example is to think about how you can use what you’ve got to create income.

As the Our Community publication, [The Complete Community Fundraising Handbook](#), puts it:

“Make a list. If you use a building, regardless of whether you own it or rent it, list it. List what rooms the building has. If it has a backyard or a playground or a large parking lot, list them too. List it all. Can you rent your office or your computers or your parking to other community groups for weekends when you’re not there? Would the public pay to have your people give lectures? Can you organise a conference?”



CERES’ Sustainable Functions program is not the only money-making venture the organisation has put in place. The organisation also runs a café, plant nursery, produce market and landscaping business, as well as a fee-for-service education program.

In fact, there’s a whole lot that community groups could learn from CERES about fundraising and advocacy just by browsing through the organisation’s website. If you want to find out more, go to www.ceres.org.au, or [click here](#) to read a recent interview about the CERES fundraising model which appeared in Our Community’s [Raising Funds](#) newsletter.

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7. Police checks for volunteers: nanny state, sensible precaution, or both?

Over the past 20 years public concern about child abuse has been growing steadily, and the requirements placed on community group volunteers have grown in proportion.

The number of areas covered by legislation increases each year – in New South Wales, for example, the Commission for Children and Young People is now canvassing plans to extend the police checking system to such volunteer organisations as sports clubs and youth clubs, and the focus is switching from the nearly complete youth protection system to the prevention of elder abuse.

As a result, Australia is covered by a patchwork of slightly differing laws (see [here](#)) placing heavy responsibility on the shoulders of community groups to answer for the bona fides of the people who do their work.

[Who’s Lending a Hand? A National Survey of Nonprofit Volunteer Screening Practices](#), a recent American study by the National Center for the Victims of Crime (NCVC), looked at screening practices in American not-for-profit organisations.

The researchers found that many human service organisations have large gaps in their procedures.

Some – 12% – don’t screen volunteers at all, other groups don’t screen all their volunteers, and some of the ones that do carry out screening still have major vulnerabilities – they don’t check references, for example, or they only look for in-state convictions. Very few checked credit ratings, which can sometimes be significant. Almost none called for fingerprint checks.

From a more detached perspective, this lack of rigour may be quite reasonable. There are many downsides to screening. It’s costly, it can be a disincentive to recruitment, it’s by no means infallible (felons are taken off the list after 10 years, the register doesn’t cover pending prosecutions, some problem characters have never come to the attention of the police), it’s inflexible and time-consuming and makes it difficult to get short-term help, and it can create a dangerous sense of complacency. It’s easy to see why a community group might go no further than it has to.

If you do screen your volunteers, of course, you need to get it right. If you ask for references, you should check them. If you run police checks on new recruits, you should repeat them every three or so years. Your organisation should develop a policy on what offences would disqualify a person from serving as a volunteer. Assault, certainly, but (say) tax evasion? Speeding? Soft drug use? Copyright infringement? Contempt of court?

It has to be remembered that abuse can have consequences for the community group as well as for the person abused. The mighty Catholic Church in the United States went close to bankruptcy from damages awarded against it when it came out that allegations of child use had been covered up.

The NCVC quotes a study that found that 5% of applicants screened by not-for-profit organisations had undisclosed criminal backgrounds (for one youth-serving organisation, the rate was 12%). Not all of these convictions, of course, would be material to their volunteering fitness.

“When volunteers are not thoroughly screened, an organisation exposes its clients to potential victimisation and itself to liability,” the NCVC report says.

“Thorough screening is one part of an overall volunteer management program, which should also include training, oversight, and well-publicised policies on interactions between volunteers and clients.”

The burdens placed on community groups do suggest, nonetheless, that some kind of cost-benefit analysis should be applied to these procedures. Both fingerprinting and credit checks, for example, would be vast escalations in cost and intrusiveness, and may be hard to justify in terms of the number of incidents prevented.

Work within the relevant legislation, as far as possible adjust your precautions to the scale of the perceived risk, and try and anticipate possible difficulties.

[Click here](#) for a help sheet to get you started, and [here](#) for some more help sheets about risk management for your organisation, particularly in relation to the selection and recruitment of staff and volunteers who may deal with children and young people.

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8. TOP FIVE

Top five tips for a healthy event

If you're taking care of the health of both your volunteers and the general public (and you should be), take these considerations into account when planning your next fundraising event.

- 1. Free and easily accessible water**
You may think you can make more money by selling your own cans (and perhaps forbidding other people from bringing their own), but this is very risky. If anyone gets dehydrated you may be held liable. Make sure that volunteers have a clear source of hydration, even if you have to buy it.
- 2. Adequate first aid**
You may be able to get this expertise from within your own volunteer roster – that is, you may be able to arrange for your volunteers to take the course. If not, though, you'll have to make other arrangements.
- 3. Smoke-free areas**
This is a no-brainer. Slightly harder is the question of whether to have an entirely smoke-free event. Will this discourage participants? On the other hand, is it ethical to facilitate ill-health? Will it cheapen your brand?
- 4. Shaded areas**
Any outdoors event venue needs to have as much shade as possible.
To set a good example volunteers should be encouraged to be SunSmart (a long-sleeved collared shirt, sunglasses and a broad-rimmed hat when outdoors).
- 5. Healthy publicity**
These tips do involve you doing more work, so you need to get something back for the cause. Try and make it a sales feature. Promote your healthy event in your media campaign and stress how friendly it is to families (working families, even!). Explain any restrictions to volunteers in advance.

Keep it fun, keep it healthy, and minimise risks.

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9. Assessing community needs

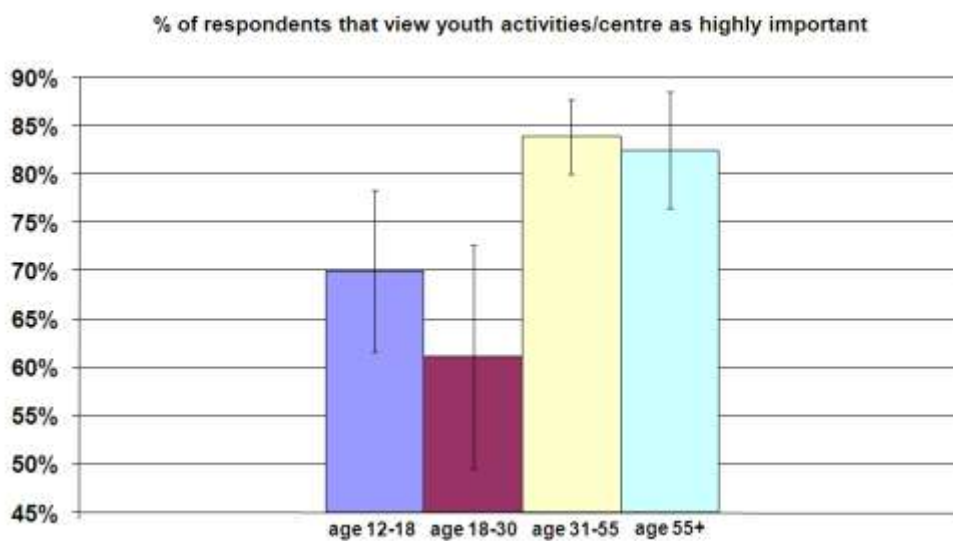
Community settings provide us with a sense of community and reflect the integration of people into networks and structures that provide those feelings of belonging, identification and meaning that are essential to wellbeing.

It's easy to say that we're in favour of community activity, somewhat harder to say what exactly that means in particular circumstances and perhaps harder again to say what people in that community actually want.

Dr David Wilson and his team from Sydney's Georges River Life Care wandered around the 2006 Gannons Park Spring Festival, a one-day event run annually by the Lugarno Lions Club which attracts 25,000 local community members each year, asking people about what the community needed.

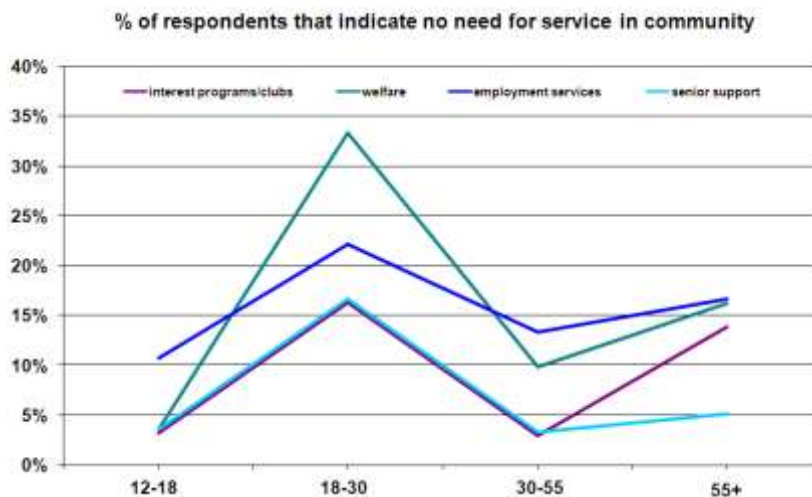
The most striking finding may be that different age groups were closely similar in their rankings of different forms of community support. All age groups, for example, put support for youth activities and senior support at the top of their lists.

It's also noticeable, though, that the young adult (18-30) respondents indicated the lowest interest in the importance of community activities and support services in all cases (including "Activities for Youth"), a high proportion specifically asserting that such services are not important.



Furthermore, despite the fact that young adults as a group clearly portrayed their comparative lack of interest in community-related structures and support facilities, a majority of all groups of respondents were in favour of youth facilities in theory.

Not surprisingly, more middle-aged respondents also desired greater family support, and more seniors desired a sense of greater connectivity.



This study does underline the importance of asking in any community what is important to which people rather than relying on overall averages.

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10. Burma crisis sparks wave of online giving

The unfolding tragedy in Burma following Cyclone Nargis has again seen Australians dig deep – with an increasing number donating online through the Australian Giving Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving.

More than \$55,000 has so far been donated to the various Burma Cyclone Appeals listed at the Giving Centre, with almost \$15,000 of that amount being donated in a single day.

As well as donations, many organisations are also sending goods to the disaster zone. Rotary Australia, for example, has sent almost 900 shelter boxes – containing a large tent, sleeping bags, cooking utensils and other items for a family of four.

With signs that the Burmese junta may finally be easing up on its callous efforts to block foreign aid organisations from getting help to the survivors, there's never been a better time to give.

Visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/burma to browse the appeals, or click the button to the right.



Beware of fraudsters

Meanwhile, fundraising bodies from around the world have warned donors not to fall for hoax appeals and scams in the wake of the Burma cyclone disaster.

The warning comes after word from the UK that hoaxers had distributed emails claiming to be from the Red Cross. The emails asked people to make a donation, with hoaxers cloning the Red Cross website form which asks for bank details, topped with the charity's logo and real address.

Donors were asked to fill in the Red Cross form and send it to an address fraudsters had set up, info@britishredcross.org.uk, which is similar to the real one the charity uses.

Giving Centre update

Online giving to the Burma Cyclone Appeals has helped push donations through the Australian Giving Centre beyond the \$7 million mark.

This free service, which is operated by Our Community with the support of Westpac, has now raised a total of \$7.3 million, with more than 55,000 individuals and businesses having made a donation.

There are still a few weeks to go before the end of the financial year, which means donations are set to continue apace.

If you want to list an appeal through the Giving Centre (remember, it's free!) go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/receivedonations.

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11. How much do you like your job, really?

If people in the community sector are asked why the general wages level is so low, they generally put it down to the presumed fact that it's balanced by high job satisfaction. But is it? In *Doing Well by Doing Good? A Report on Work Satisfaction in Civil Society*, a report put out by the Gilbert Center, The survey asked: (1) Overall, how satisfied are you with your job? (2) How satisfied are you with the kind of work you do?

Here, of course, there are two independent variables being measured: (1) The actual circumstances of people's work are not read off directly but are filtered through (2) the standards that they have for their work.

Nonetheless, the survey draws two conclusions.

Conclusion #1: People working in civil society are no more and no less satisfied than those working in the broader economy.

Well, do workers in civil society – which is how the Gilbert Center views the community sector – have a different, possibly more demanding set of standards than the population at large? Quite possibly. For one thing,

Conclusion #2: Barely half as many people who work in civil society are completely satisfied with their job as those who work in society at large – 15% of civil society respondents compared to 28% of society at large.

From some perspectives, this is a counter-intuitive result. You might think there would be a higher proportion of people in the sector who would be completely satisfied. But such is not the case.

Working conditions in the community sector aren't *that* much worse than in the rest of the economy. It's entirely possible, though, that workers in the community sector, having opened the door to the role of their values in the workplace, are substantially more demanding about the standards that would allow them to say they were completely satisfied.

The survey also asked: "Some people get a sense of identity from their job. For other people, their job is just what they do for a living. Which of these best describes the way you usually feel about your job?"

This is where the differences come out.

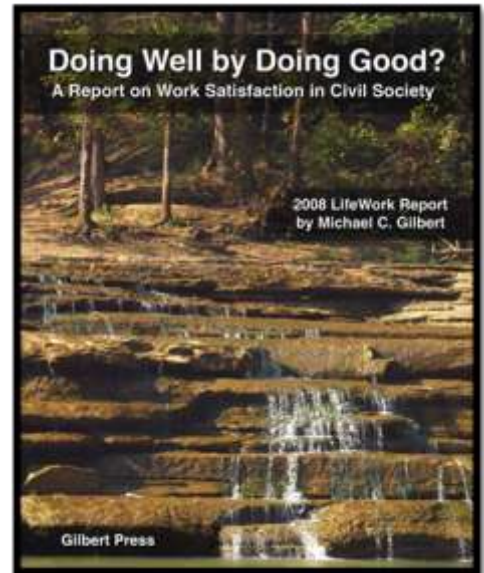
Conclusion #3: The vast majority of people who work in civil society see their job as part of their identity, compared to society at large, in which nearly half of all workers see their job as just a way to earn a living.

This suggests that the standards to which people hold their jobs and careers play an important role in how satisfied they are. Relatively similar career satisfaction can be seen as the result of two forces working in opposing directions. It may be that community sector careers are indeed more satisfying, but that workers in the community sector, because their jobs are part of their sense of identity, hold their careers to higher standards.

This dynamic can also explain why people in the community sector hold more modest enthusiasm for their jobs, with half as many saying they are completely satisfied.

It may be that, once having opened their eyes to the possibility of work as a reflection of their identity, they have a sense of how much better it could be.

The report is online at <http://gems.imelda.soceco.org/renaissance/DoingWellByDoingGood.pdf>.



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12. Community Briefs

Join In, Join Up: Thanks for your input

Thanks to all of those who responded to our article in the last edition of *Our Community Matters* calling for help in completing our **Join In, Join Up!** community group listings.

We received a large number of very thoughtful, very useful responses, all of which will be considered carefully before we finalise the listings in coming weeks.

Thanks too to all of the groups who answered our call in a follow-up email to update your group's listing on the online [Directory of Community Groups](#).

Again, there was a really terrific response, which we're sure will result in an even better resource for community members wishing to find out more about local community groups, and for groups looking for more members, donors, and supporters.

If you missed the email, you still have time to update your listing before the Join In, Join Up! project is unveiled to the public. Simply go to www.ourcommunity.com.au and log in to make changes.

(And if you missed last edition's article on this exciting new project, you can download last edition of *Our Community Matters* – and in fact all past editions – at www.ourcommunity.com.au/ocmatters.)

Being a better spokesperson

Thanks to our favourite communications newsletter, Hootville Lowdown, for these simple tips on how to be a better spokesperson:

Do not sound like the power company representative – the 32-year-old inner-city residing PR graduate can often be heard on radio politely chirping: "We apologise to 6500 customers in the western suburbs currently experiencing blackouts. We are working to rectify the problem as soon as possible and apologise for any inconvenience. We thank you for your patience."


Do sound like you have a pulse. Some of the nation's most effective and media-friendly spokespersons come across as *human*. Gerry Harvey, Dr Hugh Wirth, Dick Smith, Prof Tim Flannery, Heather Ridout, John Singleton et al. These folk sound like they are in charge of what they think and say. They sound like real people and are more persuasive as a result.

In a world of highly trained, risk-averse spokespersons it is easy to stand out. Sound like you **really are** apologetic, excited, disappointed, concerned or happy.


Use real words not "moving forward", "process", "consultation", "outcome" and the like.

Tell stories, talk conversationally, pose hypotheticals.

Be human. Media love it and so does the public.



"Do sound like you have a pulse. Some of the nation's most effective and media-friendly spokespersons come across as *human*."



Broadband blowout

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has just released its latest Internet Activity Survey (IAS), which shows that a million businesses and 6 million households (out of 10 million) are now linked to the net.

Most of them are on the faster and more capacious cable or ADSL (with wireless rising fast, too).

In the past, many community group emails and newsletter mail-outs have been kept small – in text format, for example, as opposed to HTML or Word – because that was easier for people with slow downloads.

If you're addressing particular disadvantaged groups, that might still be a factor; however, it's worth noting that the rapid growth in fast connections is going to mean that fewer and fewer of your correspondents are going to need special consideration.

Survey your contacts from time to time to see what their internet capabilities are and how they'd like to receive your materials. You may be surprised what you find.

Cultural initiatives rewarded

Community-based public art installations in Bankstown and video interpretations of traditional Chinese stories in Baulkham Hills were two of the projects honoured in this year's New South Wales Local Government Cultural Awards.

A record 72 entries were received, with 20 councils winning awards. Thirty-two of the entries were from regional and rural councils.

The eight award categories included Accessible Arts, which make cultural activities accessible to people with disabilities; Cultural Infrastructure, where a local cultural facility has been developed; and Aboriginal Cultural Development.

The annual awards were organised by the Local Government Association of New South Wales and the Local Shires Association of New South Wales, and sponsored by Country Energy and Accessible Arts.

Another winner was Wollongong City Council's Merrigong Environmental Sculpture Project, where six bronze structures marked the Five Islands Lookout as the site of a massacre and a site of significance to women.

And Bland Shire Council proved that while it is Bland by name, it is not bland by nature, winning an award in the Integrated Cultural Policy Implementation category. The council organised Christmas and Australia Day celebrations, and screened films in shire chambers. For further information: <http://www.culturalawards2008.lgsa.org.au/>.

Guide to dealing with youth complaints

Community groups that make decisions that impact on children and young people have access to a new resource: *Guidelines for Dealing with Youth Complaints*.

Published by the New South Wales Ombudsman, the guide focuses on addressing complaints from people aged 12 to 17 or their advocates.

"This is the age group which tends to be most vulnerable and challenging to communicate with in a complaint-handling context," the guide says.

It says a number of factors may prevent young people from resolving complaints, including fear that a service will be withdrawn if they complain, a lack of trust in authority figures and a fear of retribution.

To communicate with young people, the guide recommends:

- Being yourself
- Being fair and supportive
- Being patient, and giving the young person time to explain him/herself
- Sticking to one issue at time
- Addressing the young person by their first name even in written correspondence
- Using short sentences, headings and dot points.

To read the guide go to: <http://tinyurl.com/5awgg9>

Board/Committee members: heed this

The UK's *Third Sector* reports that a large Scottish charity has collapsed because of poor governance and an inadequate response to the funding environment.

A report from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator found that One Plus: One Parent Families had a turnover of £11m in 2005, but went into liquidation in January 2007.


According to the OSCR report, One Plus ran out of funds to pay its liabilities after its debts spiralled out of control. The organisation's overdraft had grown from £800,000 to £2m, and it owed £2.7m to HM Revenue & Customs.

The organisation's board "did not appear to contain adequate skills and independence of thinking to reflect the needs of a multimillion-pound business," the report said, and financial matters were "not covered effectively" at board level.

According to the report, the organisation had failed to recover its full costs on projects, running many at a loss. Most of its grants and contracts were paid in arrears and little of the money was available for core funding.

OSCR chief executive Jane Ryder told *Third Sector*: "Charity trustees have a very clear role to ensure that the board has the skills and experience necessary to meet governance responsibilities, including business challenges."

Which board/committee members felt a cold chill down your spine when reading that? Note, too, on a more cheerful note, that despite the finding of lack of competence none of the board was found to be personally liable.



"Charity trustees have a very clear role to ensure that the board has the skills and experience necessary to meet governance responsibilities, including business challenges."

Negotiating board change

Board consultant Catherine Brown writes in the latest edition of the Board Builder newsletter:

By its nature, board membership is dynamic.

Even when you think you have the perfect combination of skills and experience and the right board culture – full of healthy but respectful discussions about strategy and organisational performance – the likelihood of change is high.

This might be due to the ill health or even death of a board member, or it might be because a board members' other roles change and the board role is no longer possible or appropriate.

It might be because time limits for board appointment have been reached – years can pass very quickly when you are busily engaged and even having fun! In other situations, board appointments might relate to positions held or appointments made by member organisations.

Suddenly the chair or a key board member might find themselves only three months away from being replaced for no reason other than that the member organisation's constitution provides for this.

The most important lesson from these experiences is the need to think ahead. In particular, the chair should be actively aware of possible changes and begin preparing the board for change well in advance.

Catherine's full article, and her tips for dealing with change within a board, is in the May edition of Board Builder newsletter. For more information, go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/boardbuilder.

New guide on Volunteers and Tax

Just to remind us all of the ever-increasing administrative burdens shouldered by community groups, here comes the Australian Tax Office's updated guide on Volunteers and Tax to explain the tax treatment of transactions between not-for-profit organisations and their volunteers.

To sum it up briefly – no, sorry, we're joking, this is Australian tax law. You can't sum it up briefly.

Have a look yourself by clicking [this link](#).



What's on in the community sector

Our Community's online [Community Calendar](#) features all of the nationally significant events focussed around a major community or advocacy/awareness issues in Australia.

Some of the events taking place over the next month include:

- **Reconciliation Week:** May 27-June 3
- **Schizophrenia Awareness Week:** May 20-27
- **National Palliative Care Week:** May 25-31
- **National Public Education Day Week:** May 26-June 1
- **White Wreath Day – In remembrance of all victims of suicide:** May 29
- **Medical Research Week:** June 2-8
- **World Environment Day:** June 5
- **International Men's Health Week:** June 9-13
- **National Amputee Awareness Day:** June 11
- **World Blood Donor Day:** June 14
- **Refugee Week:** June 15-21
- **Drug Action Week:** June 22-28

More events, plus the full listing for each event (including organisational contact details and websites), can be found in the online Community Calendar at www.ourcommunity.com.au/calendar.

New tools available to support funding applications

A new website provides Victorian community groups with a handy reference point to local community wellbeing indicators for each local government area – stats that can be useful in mounting a case for funding and other forms of support.

The Community Indicators Victoria website is a project hosted by the McCaughey Centre at Melbourne University's School of Population Health, and aims to use "local community wellbeing indicators to improve citizen engagement, community planning and policy making".

The site provides statistics – based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics – to provide measurements under a variety of categories, including:

- Feeling part of the community;
- Community acceptance of diverse cultures;
- Social support;
- Crime;
- Perception of safety;
- Volunteering;
- Workforce data;
- Education information;
- Transport;
- Work-life balance, and;
- Participation in arts and cultural activities.



Data for each Victorian local government area is featured on the site, and is easily accessed by clicking on maps.

To use the site, you must register – though registration is free. It is located at www.communityindicators.net.au.

Other stats are available for Victoria at www.vlga.org.au/resources/list.chtml?folder=Social%20Statistics.

And in New South Wales ...

Meanwhile, Our Community, with the support of social demographer Hayden Brown from the City of Greater Dandenong, has produced some easy-to-use summaries of Australian Bureau of Statistics social indicators for all NSW municipalities.

The indicators allow people working on grant applications or council community development staff to quickly and easily compare social demographic conditions across municipalities and also Indigenous collection areas.

The stats can be downloaded from the Our Community website at www.ourcommunity.com.au/stats.

Victorian Government thanks volunteers

Victoria's Community Development Minister Peter Batchelor has thanked the state's volunteers for their efforts while announcing a further opportunity for people to get involved in volunteering.

Mr Batchelor has announced a \$4 million extension to the *Victorian Volunteer Small Grants* program.

The program has allocated more than 950 grants since 2004 to community groups to help them attract new volunteers and find new ways for them to participate in their organisations. The new funding for the program will ensure it is extending until 2011.

"Many of these organisations and services would cease to function without committed volunteers who donate their time and energy," Mr Batchelor said.

"We recently revised the guidelines for these grants to make it easier for community groups to apply so even more Victorians can benefit."

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13. Community Classifieds – notices, offers, awards, giveaways & tips

WANTED: communications projects

If you have a question or problem that relates to your organisation's communication then RMIT University's students may be able to assist.

Students work in teams to plan, execute, evaluate and present a research project under the supervision of course co-ordinators for not-for-profit clients.

If your organisation is planning, currently implementing or has just completed an event, communication initiative or ongoing communication campaign, it is likely that our students can assist you by conducting supporting research.

Students will have completed an intensive research subject in the semester preceding and will be well placed to conduct rigorous independent research.

To register your interest, please email olivia.guntarik@rmit.edu.au or call (03) 9925 1911.

TO GIVE AWAY: landscaping materials

An eastern Australian landscaping business is seeking a community partner or partners for ongoing donation of landscaping materials including natural stone paving and concrete pavers.

Eco Concepts general manager Tony Mims says the company often has a reasonable amount of product left in batch ends – not damaged or seconds stocks, just ends of particular sizes or colours – which he thinks may be of great use to a community group.

Community gardens, community housing or community kindergartens are among the groups he believes might be able to benefit from this regular supply of materials.

The company has showrooms in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney. For details, contact Tony by telephoning (03)9427 8911 or email to tony@ecoconcepts.com.au

WANTED: community development practitioners

Community development practitioners are being sought as part of a new research project designed to identify whether there is a difference between community development practice in a non-disaster affected community, as opposed to community development practice in the disaster recover context.

Researcher Mary Ireland is seeking community development practitioners who have

1. worked in community development projects in non disaster affected communities
2. worked in community development projects in the disaster recovery context
3. worked in both scenarios.

Two community development practitioners from each category are being sought, and research will involve a narrative questioning process involving around two hours of face-to-face interviews and a follow-up telephone survey if required.

The research is being undertaken as part of a Graduate Certificate in Emergency Management module.

Mary has suggested that the June 16 and 17 Communities in Control conference in Moonee Ponds could offer a good opportunity for interviews. For details or to express an interest in taking part in the research, please contact Mary on 0411 243 733 or email to mary.ireland@health.sa.gov.au.

TO GIVE AWAY: gold jewellery

About 10 pieces of new 18 carat gold jewellery (purchased on sale before Christmas) is available to a community group in New South Wales. For details, please contact Gabriel Shenay at Gabriel.shenay@bigpond.com or telephone 0409 943 414.

14. Good Moves – community jobs & board/committee vacancies



Good Moves :: Jobs Bulletin

www.ourcommunity.com.au

JOB VACANCY LISTINGS (Paid Positions)

Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
Community Support Workers	Vision Australia	Details

Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
Assistant Manager	Span Community House	Details
National Program Manager - Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Accreditation	Australian Breastfeeding Association	Details
Project Worker	Disability Justice Advocacy	Details
Early Childhood Educator	Vision Australia	Details
Project Officer - Preventing Violence Against Women	Women's Health Victoria	Details
Health Promotion Officer (readvertised)	Women's Health Victoria Inc.	Details
Sessional Trainers	New Deal	Details
Fundraising and Marketing Manager	Rainbow Riders Inc	Details
Information Officer	Women's Health Victoria Inc.	Details
Strategic Partnerships Manager	International Women's Development Agency	Details

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	
General Board Member	2XX Community Radio	Details

New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
General Board Member, x3	kedesh rehabilitation service ltd	Details

Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
Treasurer, General Board Member	Coastal Accommodation Support Service Inc	Details

Tasmania

Job Title	Organisation	
General Board Member	TASRAD	Details

Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
General Board Member	Volunteer West	Details
General Board Member	South Kingsville Community Centre	Details
Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, General Board Member	Kirinari Community Services Limited	Details
Deputy Treasurer	Women's Health Victoria	Details
Treasurer	DV Vic	Details
Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, General Board Member	Mwamba House	Details
General Board Member	The PATCH Foundation	Details
Secretary, General Board Member	Hurstbridge Community Centre	Details
General Board Member	KARA HOUSE INC	Details

www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs

15. Fast Forward

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send it on to your friends and fellow community groups in your area. People can sign up to receive their own copy at 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" and a direct link to the www.ourcommunity.com.au site if on a webpage.

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

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16. About Our Community

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise that provides advice and tools for Australia's 700,000 community groups and schools, and practical linkages between the community sector and the general public, business and government.

Our major offerings include:

1. 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 businesses give in every way
3. [Australian Institute for Community Practice and Governance](#) – practical and accessible certificated training delivered locally through our training Institute
4. [Institute for Best Practice in Grants Management](#) – the unique suite of grants management services for government
5. [Australian Institute for Corporate Responsibility](#) – cutting edge corporate responsibility resources for large, medium and small business and community organisations

Read more about us at www.ourcommunity.com.au/aboutus.

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