



Edition 1, 2012 – Issued February 22, 2012

Our Community Matters is your free community sector update, brought to you by Our Community – the premier online destination for Australia's 600,000 community groups and schools. [Click here](#) to receive your free copy.



Contents

1. [Here's One You Won't Want to Miss: 2012 Grants Bootcamp to kick off CIC in style](#)
2. [The Joy of SACS: Equal pay for work of equal value](#)
3. [Too little honour for the world and work of women, says Our Community Chair](#)
4. [Social media offers more opportunities to learn and connect with Our Community](#)
5. [It's Consultation Season: Federal reforms continue at a pace](#)
6. [New Year's Warning: Get your house in order](#)
7. [Around the Traps: Services by and for community groups](#)
8. [Managing 'mental illness' at work: What's REALLY going on out there?](#)
9. [Our Community 2012 Training Calendar now available](#)
10. [Two Cheers for Volunteers!](#)
11. [What's in a domain name?](#)
12. [Marketing Guru: Five rules for managing a PR mess](#)
13. [Community Sector fraud falling: report](#)
14. [What would 'Big Society' mean for Australia?](#)
15. [Community Calendar: What's on in the community sector](#)
16. [Community Sector Briefs](#)
17. [Good Moves: Community Sector Jobs & Board Vacancies](#)
18. [Fast Forward](#)
19. [About Our Community](#)

1. Here's One You Won't Want To Miss: 2012 Grants Bootcamp to kick off CIC in style

This year's Communities in Control Conference will be our 10th – gosh, how time flies!

Details will be sent to your inbox very soon, but the speaker line-up already confirmed promises that this will be our best conference ever (**Judith Lucy** [comedian], **George Megalogenis** [political journalist], **Associate Professor Natasha Cica** [ethicist], **Margaret Simons** [media expert], **Scott Riddle** [Google], **Andrew Charlton** [senior economic adviser], **Vika and Linda Bull** [singers], **Damian Ogden** [Campaign Action & Obama advisor], **The Hon. Joan Kirner AM** [communities ambassador]... and more to come!).

We're kicking off this year's Communities in Control in style with our most ambitious curtain-raiser skills-building day yet.

Our **Grants Bootcamp**, to be held on Sunday, May 27, 2012, will help you:

- **Strip back and rebuild your grantseeking approach** – practical, instantly implementable advice from Our Community Grants Guru Patrick Moriarty
- **Get the lowdown on who's most likely to fund your group** through our Who's Who in the Zoo panel session
- **Practice your pitch** – get one-on-one feedback from one of our 20 grants coaches
- **Meet the grantmakers, one-on-one** – more than 30 real live grantmakers from organisations including the Myer Foundation, the Potter Foundation, the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR), the Telstra Foundation, ANZ Trustees, local councils, community foundations, and state/federal government community grantmaking outfits will take part in our speed dating session.

This event is designed for staff and volunteers from community organisations of all sizes and types who want to improve their grantseeking skills, knowledge and connections (though grassroots groups have the most to gain).

Due to the logistics of managing so many grantmakers and (we anticipate) so many grantseekers, we're going to have to cap numbers for this one – so get in quick!

Here's a quick rundown:

- WHAT:** 2012 Grants Bootcamp (part of Communities in Control 2012)
- WHEN:** Sunday, May 27, 2012; 9.30am-4.30pm
- WHERE:** Moonee Valley Racing Club, Moonee Ponds
- WHY:** Get information, skills and connections that will lift your grantseeking into the stratosphere
- WHO:** Staff and volunteers of community organisations who are (or want to be) involved in grantseeking
- WHO ELSE:** More than 30 leading grantmaking organisations to attend speed dating session. Confirmed attendees include:
- The Myer Foundation
 - The Ian Potter Foundation
 - Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
 - The Norman Wettenhall Foundation
 - Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation

Features:

GRANTS SPEED DATING - over 30 grantmakers already confirmed to attend!

GET IN QUICK: numbers are capped

- Telstra Foundation
- State Trustees
- ANZ Trustees
- Scanlon Foundation
- Gardiner Foundation
- auDA Foundation
- Slingsby Foundation
- nib foundation
- Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation
- Give Where You Live
- Philanthropy Australia
- Community Foundations – Mirboo North & District, Inner North
- Local Councils – Melton, Bayside, Parramatta, Fairfield, Moorabool, Yarra, Newcastle
- Community Broadcasting Foundation

COST: \$260 for Grants Bootcamp, plus \$330 for Communities in Control (delegates must attend both the Bootcamp and the Conference). Total Price: \$590.
 Early bird and group booking discounts are available.
Single-day entry not available. See website for details.

BOOKINGS: www.ourcommunity.com.au/cicgrantsbootcamp

[Back to Top](#)

2. The Joy of SACS: Equal pay for work of equal value

It can hardly have escaped your notice that community sector workers have finally got some justice – in the form of a decision by Fair Work Australia awarding them a rise of between 19% and 41%, depending on your grade, over and above standard annual inflation adjustments.

Workers covered by the Social and Community Sector (SACS) award also get a 4% increase in loadings. If you want to see what that means in dollars for your own salary, go to the judgment [here](#) and have a look at the tables.

Note, though, that you’ll have to wait until 2020 for the tribunal’s new, more just, pay scales to be fully implemented.

Still, SACS workers are a patient lot – after all, they’ve been running this case for 23 months now, they didn’t get their own award till 1996, and before that they’d been putting up with unequal pay for, well, ever – so they’ll probably cope.

Let’s congratulate the Australian Services Union, which has shown us all why unions exist, the Queensland Government, which set the example, and the Federal Government, which supported the push.



Our comments on the various state governments will have to wait until we see what they actually do. At the moment they're busy redoing their sums to take account of (a) how much their original alarmist estimates were deliberately exaggerated and (b) how much they can bargain, wheedle or threaten out of the Feds.

Of the two governments seemingly most opposed to the raises,

- the NSW Government has now welcomed the judgment and says it will pay "its fair share", while calling for more Federal money,
- the Victorian government has called for more Federal money without making any promises.

What this means, in terms of actual budget outlays, is yet to be seen. More patience yet may be required.

For not-for-profits, this will be a busy time:

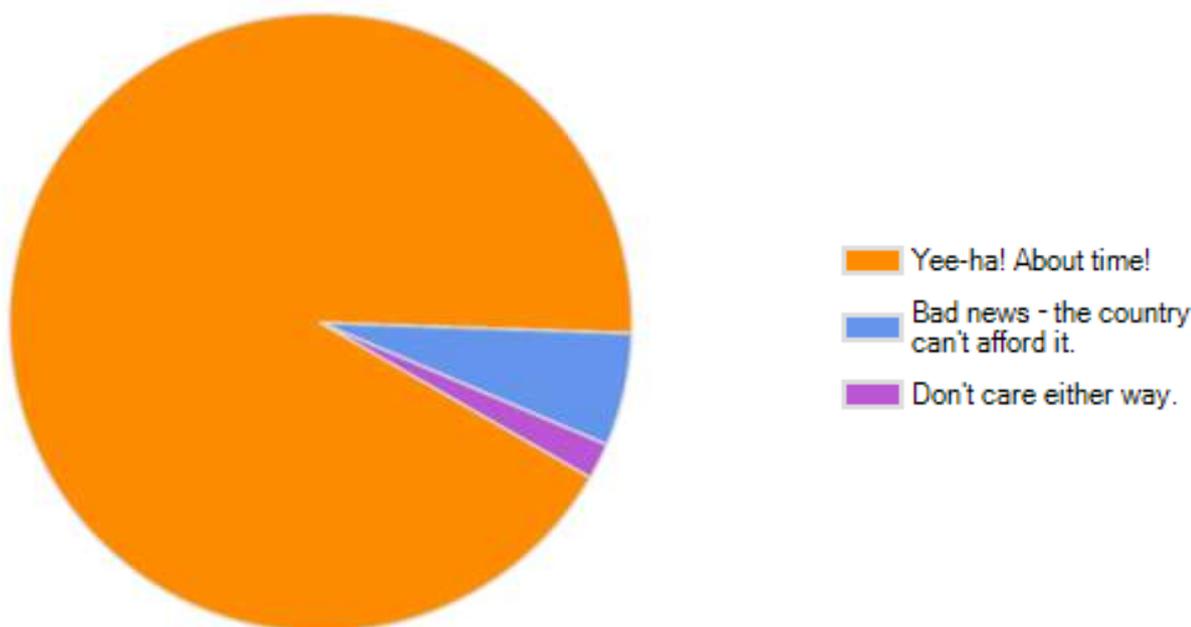
- Check your staff files to see who, if anyone, comes under the SACS award. If there's nobody, you can sleep soundly tonight. Otherwise, you'll have to begin figuring in raises of between 2% and 5% this year for any staff under the SACS award. Make sure your Treasurer is made aware of the new lie of the land.
- If you're receiving government funding, you'd better get on to your paymasters promptly to press them for compensation.
- If you're not getting government funding – and in the Fair Work hearings, Catholic Social Services Australia said that 75% of its services weren't – you're under pressure. Draft proposals to take to the Board.

We didn't say it was going to be easy. But we've quoted [Elizabeth Broderick's address to Communities in Control](#) before, and we'll do it again now:

Whether the work is properly valued and how any increase might be paid, they're two separate issues. A perceived inability to fund equal pay should not impede what is our basic human right, and that's equal pay for work of equal value.

Meanwhile, Our Community members have given resounding thumbs up to the Federal Government's promise to provide \$2 billion in funding in support of the pay case.

A total of 343 people answered our latest [two-second poll](#), with 92% coming out in favour of the announcement. Another 6% thought this was bad news; that the country could not afford it, while 2% said they didn't care either way.



[Back to Top](#)

3. Too little honour for the world and work of women, says Our Community Chair

While community sector workers celebrate their historic fair pay win, it's worth remembering that things remain far from equal in so many Australian settings.

Our Community Chair Carol Schwartz AM penned this opinion piece, which appeared in *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* on February 8.



Another Australia day, another round of fireworks and another honours list. Another evocation of the qualities Australia admires and the fields that Australians look up to, from which we can deduce that Australians think that the things men do are twice as worthy as the things that women do.

As in previous years, less than a third of the names on the Australia Day honours list are women. As in previous years, women are given more awards in the lowest grades than in the higher.

When Gough Whitlam brought in Australian honours in 1975 to replace Knights, Dames, the Order of St. Michael and St. George, the British Empire Medal, and all the baggage of the British court, he wanted to show the world that Australians had a proud record of achievement, a vigorous culture, and a diverse society. In those first years the proportion of women on the list was less than 20%, yes, but back then that was a progressive achievement. Half a lifetime later we've painfully inched that up to 30%, nearly all that gain coming in the 1990s.

What's particularly discouraging is that the situation is now actually getting worse. The peak came in 2003, and the trend line is now dropping by about 2% a decade. Just sitting back and hoping for women to achieve fair, equal recognition is not going to be enough.

“It would be easy for a foreigner to come away with the impression that Australia had more professional sportspeople than care workers.”

Much of this disproportion arises from the unquestioned fact that recognition of women's contributions lags in other areas of Australian life. About a tenth of the list are professors, and women make up nine out of those 43. Doctors make up about another eighth, and women make up eleven out of that 54. About an eighth of the awards are for services to business or industry, and women make up just two out of those 55. If those three sectors rewarded women at the current average rate – not half-and-half, just no worse than other sectors – we'd already be a third of the way to full equality.

It's also notable that the areas of Australian life where women are dominant are almost completely missing from the awards. If we turn our minds to people who do good for others, just about the first images that come to mind would be nurses and teachers, both of which professions are weighted towards women. Yet nursing gets a bare four mentions in the Australia Day honours list, while teaching gets three (all of them in the field of teaching the arts rather than firing the imaginations of 20 unruly schoolchildren desperate for recess). There's one therapist on the list. There are no social workers. It would be easy for a foreigner to come away with the impression that Australia had more professional sportspeople than care workers.

Nobody is suggesting a conspiracy. Women who are nominated are given awards – even if they're predominantly the less elevated awards – at a higher rate than men. It's just that women simply don't get nominated often enough. Australians – men and women – get their impression of the kind of people who should be nominated for awards by looking at people who got the awards in the past, and the stereotypes are self-perpetuating.

Public role models are to be found in more than a few sectors, and at every level of every hierarchy. Only by widening our concepts will we be able to open up the field, and it's only by opening up the field that women are going to have a chance to reach equality in the presentation of gold wattle brooches with a little crown on top.

Women who make it in this society have had to do much more to reach the same elevation as their male peers, and deserve their weighting in the nomination process. There's no theoretical reason why women should not make up half the honours lists.

Women's Leadership Institute Australia (WLIA) and Our Community are doing something to help rebalance the situation (see www.ourcommunity.com.au/honours), but we can all do much more. There's nothing stopping any one of us from picking out from our acquaintanceships the women we most admire and filling out the forms on their behalf.

True, the disproportion of awards is only a symptom of an underlying fault – but if we get together to fix this, that'll get us a large part of the way to the kinds of organisational infrastructure that we need.

Australian women are not less talented than Australian men, or worse leaders, or less public-spirited. What we are, unarguably, is worse at organising networks for official recognition of those in our networks.

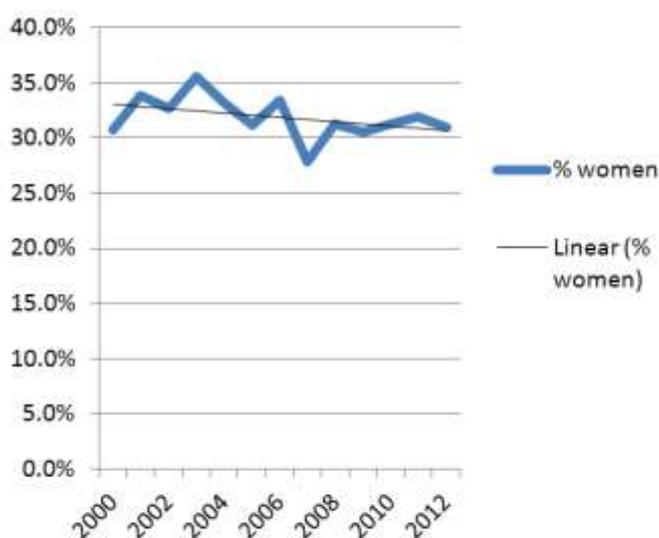
Come on, let's just do it. If every thousandth woman in Australia downloads the nomination forms now, we can get this thing sorted overnight (quicker still if men get on board too).

And there aren't many social problems that are that easy to fix.

Carol Schwartz AM is Founder and Chair of Women's Leadership Institute Australia, and Founding Chair of Our Community.

[Back to Top](#)

Australian Honours % women



(NOTE: 2012 figures represent January intake only)

4. Social media offers more opportunities to learn and connect with Our Community

One thing that social media does really well is to deliver information in bite-sized chunks.

With this in mind, Our Community is get more active on Twitter, Facebook and Google+ during 2012.

Throughout the year we'll be rolling out capacity building ideas, useful links, tips and tricks and tools via our Twitter, Facebook and Google+ pages.

Not into it? We respect your choice! We'll keep delivering all the things you need to know via this newsletter.

Here's what we've posted so far:





OC FUNDING TIP

Many community groups get into trouble because they have only two or three sources of funding – you need your fundraising to be drawn from as many sources as you can manage, raised by as many people as you can coordinate.

A good fundraising plan rests on six pillars: Donations; Grants; Community-Business Partnerships; Membership/Alumni/Friends; Special Events; Earned Income.

To survive and thrive in a changing world, you need to be drawing from all six.

Find out how at the Community Funding Centre. Click the link to go straight to our help sheet on this topic.

► [Funding Centre Help Sheet - The Six Pillars of Fundraising](#)



OC MARKETING TIP

Don't send out boring marketing material: Blow people away with our document templates that will take your marketing from zero to hero!

We've got a range of letter, postcard, coupon and envelope templates online that you can download in Word, Publisher and Adobe, plus links to heaps more available on other sites.

And they're all free! Click the link to see what's available.

► [Marketing, Media and Post Centre - Layout Ideas](#)

[Click here](#) to follow us on Twitter, [here](#) to view our Facebook page, and [here](#) to link up on Google+.

While we're on the topic, we'd love to know which social media you're using (to make sure we're sending our stuff out via the right channels). Please take our two-second poll here: www.ourcommunity.com.au/poll

Our Community Poll (February 2012)

* 1. Do you use social media? If so, which ones do you use?

- Don't use it: Never have; never will - not my thing
- Don't use it yet - but I'm thinking of wading in
- Yep - Facebook
- Yep - Twitter
- Yep - LinkedIn
- Yep - Google+
- Yep - other ones

[Back to Top](#)

5. It's Consultation Season: Federal reforms continue at a pace

By July 1, the Federal government is planning to have ready for launch a fully functioning Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) – the new regulator for Australian charities.

That's not very far in the future, considering that the current pre-Commission Taskforce is still conducting consultations about its constituent documents.

They don't have an Act yet, and they don't have a clear picture of what governance structures it's going to require or what reporting obligations it's going to impose, so there's lots of work to be done.

It's already clear, though, that the launch is only going to be the beginning of the debate.

Divided by state and type, there are at the moment about 35 possible different forms of not-for-profit (companies, incorporated associations, cooperatives, trusts, etc).

All previous attempts at bringing them under a single common governance structure have foundered in the face of state inertia or intransigence, leaving the common model behind as just another alternative in an already crowded and confusing gamut of choices.

If the ACNC works as intended, the number of possible formats may drop; if not, there'll simply be 36 of them.

The ACNC is of course aware of this history. It has in its favour the fact that it'll be taking over the functions of the Australian Tax Office in this field. That means that any organisation that wants any federal tax breaks will have to sign up with the ACNC.

The problem is the Commonwealth can't just take over the regulation of incorporated associations – it doesn't have the constitutional power – and as the incorporated association is by a long way the most popular form of legal entity in the country, the ACNC is going to take a while to get a grip on the situation.

We'll have to see, for example, whether the states show any enthusiasm for closing down their own state regulators to avoid overlap and an increase in red tape. At present the matter is in the hands of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), which does not have a reputation as a quick decision-maker even on uncontentious issues.

Beyond that, what is to be done about fundraising, another state responsibility?

As it is, an organisation that has signed up as a Registered National Body (RNB – we told you there was a range of legal forms) is entitled to operate in every state without filling in any more forms, which is handy – or would be, except that even that RNB still has to fill out a form in every state it's going to fundraise in.

In the age of instant communication nationally and internationally through the internet, this raises serious questions – questions that the government, to its credit, is addressing in a discussion paper on Charitable Fundraising Regulation Reform (another call for comment, so get your ideas together).

What's proposed is that

- (a) charities registered with the ACNC be authorised to engage in fundraising activities across Australia, and
- (b) "Due to the higher risks posed by internet and electronic fundraising.... fundraising over the internet for charitable purposes [will] be prohibited unless an entity is registered with the ACNC."

Both of these have the advantage, from the ACNC's point of view, that they would encourage not-for-profits to sign up with the ACNC, and the disadvantage all round that they would require all the states to agree.

The disadvantages from the viewpoint of everybody else are that not-for-profits that didn't make the switch to ACNC registration would have their throats cut.

The Commission will also be offering advice and information to not-for-profits and their members, over and above simple compliance with the Act – something that state bodies in the main haven't been resourced to do, and which the UK Charity Commission, which has just had its funding cut, has now announced it isn't going to do any more.

“We do not act as a complaints service looking at all complaints on behalf of complainants,” the Commission said. “We assess and identify if there is a regulatory issue or concern and if it satisfies the test we may become involved.”

If you turn to our own state agencies, you'll find they say something similar; take Victoria, for example, where Consumer Affairs says plainly:

Consumer Affairs Victoria cannot intervene in disputes between an incorporated association and any of its members, or between a member and another member. Such disputes are civil matters to be resolved by the parties involved.

It'll be interesting to see how far the ACNC moves along this spectrum, and for how long.

It's still possible to send in submissions to the ACN Taskforce's consultation papers – click here for the details, and for the dates and sites of the Taskforce meetings in each state. If you're rural or remote, go to their Facebook page.

Denis Moriarty, the Managing Director of Our Community, has submitted a full slate of answers to the Taskforce's questions – look at our submissions online here and see how your view compares.

What all this means, in any case, is that there's now going to be competition among the regulators. The Commonwealth will be trying to offer better service to lure clients from state incorporation, and it's just possible that state bureaucracies, feeling themselves under threat, will up their game.

Prepare to be wooed.

[Back to Top](#)

6. New Year's Warning: Get your house in order

Wildlife Victoria (WV) is that state's peak wildlife protection agency.

Its volunteers save native animals from flood, fire, and traffic. That's not a hard mission to sell, and WV doesn't have much trouble selling it.

Its fundraising team is talented and effective – one of the organisation's marketing flyers received the accolade of a line-by-line analysis in *Raising Funds* as an example for others.

After Black Saturday, the group brought in more than \$4 million dollars worth of donations.

So why, only two years later, is Wildlife Victoria in trouble? It's reportedly losing money unsustainably year-on-year, there are complaints in the papers and over the air from its volunteers, and its budget is being dissected line-by-line.

The *Diamond Valley Leader* opened the attack in December. “Victoria's peak wildlife group spends more money on accounting and bookkeeping than it does directly caring for animals,” the newspaper said, adding that financial records showed that “less than 6% of the organisation's total expenditure goes to volunteer carers and rescuers, who spend tens of thousands of dollars of their own money each year helping Victoria's injured and orphaned wildlife.”

The newspaper complained that “just \$6000 is budgeted monthly for wildlife shelters and rescuers” while “more than \$10,000 a month is spent on accounting, banking and bookkeeping fees”.

The problem was only exacerbated by the public's generous response to the bushfires. Getting a sudden rush of funds can be like drinking from a firehose. The money came in, yes, but WV had promised that “All unused donations

will be held available for future disaster responses ... No part of the remaining monies will be allocated outside of a disaster response context," which meant that the residue couldn't just be funnelled into paying staff costs.

The organisation's website admits that its governance resources simply weren't adequate to its new challenges.

"Wildlife Victoria recognises that the transition from a small organisation with a budget of several thousand dollars to one with several million was inadequately handled," the organisation says, pointing out that it has since altered its policies, procedures and management systems.

"This year, management instigated several cost-saving measures with the reduction of two full-time staff positions along with other refinements," WV says. "These measures resulted in a reduction in operating expenses in the last six months of the financial year 2010/11 of \$135,000 as compared to the preceding six months June to December 2010. While this is a sizable reduction in the cost base, the current management and Board recognises that more needs to be done."

Drastic measures have been taken. A change in CEO has been followed by a clean sweep of the Board, and Rob Gell, the new President, is presiding over a radical restructuring.

The 24-hour helpline has been cut back, some subsidies to volunteers have been suspended until finances are back on track, and the group is thinking more critically about its rescue services.

The fallout from this media wrangle has been largely negative. The comments on the *Leader* story show that given the slightest excuse, people who usually give grudgingly will stop giving altogether.

"I have stopped giving to charity," says one commenter. "When you find out how little actually gets to the animals you want to support it is very disappointing."

The idea that administrative expenses are somehow luxurious self-indulgence has been given new wings. WV boasted that it spent only 9% of its bushfire funds on administration; in fact it seems that that wasn't nearly enough, but it's now facing public outcry at spending anything at all on salaries. It's going to take quite some time to win back that ground.

What are the lessons for the rest of us?

- 1. *Don't build one-offs into your continuing budget.***

If you get a lucky break, don't treat that as a license to add staff, or even to go soft on overtime. There are hard times just around the corner.

- 2. *Your budget is a virtual press release. Treat it that way.***

Increasingly, we're living in a culture of transparency and exposure where you can't expect to conceal your weak points. Sooner rather than later you'll have to have your finances posted online. If your budget has holes in it, you may not be the only ones who are interested. If you can't get the figures to come together for this year, you have to be able to say why it happened and what you're doing about it.

- 3. *Don't advertise weakness.***

If you're in financial trouble, there's always the temptation to thrash around and look as if you're drowning to motivate people to toss you a lifebelt. Sorry, but it's much more like a run on a bank. If your donors think you're doomed they aren't going to throw good money after bad. However difficult it may be, you have to show people you're a going concern with a great future.

Wildlife Victoria has found out the hard way that in these cynical times good intentions and good works don't buy you much goodwill. The best of us might find ourselves at any moment at the mercy of an investigative journalist. Get out your media crisis policy and do a drill.

[Back to Top](#)

7. Around the Traps: Services by and for community groups

Salary Survey

CBB, a social enterprise which provides consulting and salary packaging services to Australia's not-for-profit sector, is conducting its annual Executive Salary Survey – and is inviting people in the sector to take part.

This is the third year CBB has run the survey, which aims to help inform of salary and employment conditions appropriate for a range of executive positions across Australia and New Zealand. Participants will receive a free copy of the survey results when they are released. [Click here](#) to complete the survey – it closes on February 29.

Social Innovation Consulting

Social Innovation Consulting is a service offered by Project Australia (www.projectaustralia.org.au) which offers not-for-profits an hour of free support to help them make their idea or project a reality.

The organisation has helped more than 50 groups since 2008, with Social Innovation Consulting providing “tailored advice and practical tools for starting, scaling or sustaining their initiatives”.

“Consultancies can cover areas such as creative brain storming, ‘asset-mapping’ and brand clarification, through to exploration of appropriate legal and business structures – including social enterprise – and how to creatively market and fundraise on a shoestring budget,” the organisation says.

The service is available to any Australian not-for-profit. For more information, or bookings, visit: www.projectaustralia.org.au/siconsulting, email: info@projectaustralia.org.au or call: (02) 9985 8243.

Crimcheck

Crimcheck is a service that Victorian not-for-profits can use to carry out police checks on prospective employees and volunteers.

Crimcheck is web-based and electronic, and accesses the national Criminal History Database in Canberra – the same database that Victoria Police uses. The service is also accredited by CrimTrac, an agency of the Federal Ministry of Justice and Customs.

Eligible not-for-profits or Department of Human Services-funded agencies can pre-purchase credits to use the service as they need. Checks cost \$34 per paid staff and \$12.50 per volunteer. Most inquiries take less than 24 hours to process.

To be eligible to use the service, not-for-profits must:

- Maintain public/property liability insurance to the value of \$10 million, and;
- Maintain professional negligence/indemnity insurance to the value of \$5 million.

For more information, email jeannek@mvr volunteer.org.au or visit www.crimcheck.org.au.

MoneyMinded workshops

MoneyMinded is a free financial education program that helps people develop better financial skills and capabilities they can then use in their own lives.

The program also offers community workers the chance to receive education on issues relating specifically to the financial needs of their clients, including:

- Planning and budgeting;
- Dealing with debt;
- Rights and responsibilities.

MoneyMinded is offering a series of three-day facilitator training workshops around Melbourne between February and June:

- February 22 in Fitzroy.
- March 13, 14 and 20 in Frankston.
- May 22, 23 and 30 in Fitzroy.
- June 19, 20 and 26 in Frankston.

To register, email: moneyminded@bsl.org.au or fmendez@bsl.org.au. For more information about MoneyMinded, visit: www.moneyminded.com.au.

Clinical Trials Connect

Making clinical trials more accessible to the public is the aim of Clinical Trials Connect (CTC).

Developed and established by two registered nurses, CTC allows volunteers interested in taking part in clinical trials to examine a list of trials and immediately register their interest in any they would like to participate in.

Trials are also sortable by state and by the clinical topic they fall under.

Potential trial participants' information is kept private, while volunteers can receive free email alerts about trials as well. For more information, visit www.ctc.asn.au or email: mpym@ctc.asn.au.

OurSay: Have your issue heard in Federal Parliament!

Got a burning question?

OurSay is giving you the chance to get your question asked in the House of Representatives and reported on by *Crikey*.

Each week Crikey.com.au will feature a new reader's question, and will look into the where/how and why of the issue and the politics behind it. One of the most popular questions will be taken all the way to Parliament House.

A Member of Parliament (whose name will be revealed after voting closes) has agreed to take part in this initiative and take the People's Question to Question Time

Go to www.oursay.org/the-people-s-question to ask and vote for your questions now!

Help give OurSay a push-along

While we're on the topic of OurSay, we're keen to point out that this great group, the online lightning rod for the big questions the community wants answered by the people in charge, is vying for a spot at the Unreasonable Institute – and they need your help.

The Institute, which is based in America, brings together 25 entrepreneurs from around the world for a six-week "social enterprise accelerator" program. Participants will live together in Colorado and work together to cultivate their ideas, alongside a series of top business minds and venture capitalists.

To make the final cut, OurSay (the only Australian shortlisted organisation) needs to demonstrate their support base by raising \$10,000 in mostly small donations.

To help give them a push-along, make a donation now (**time's running out!**) at <http://bit.ly/zApEG9>



[Back to Top](#)

8. Managing 'mental illness' at work: What's REALLY going on out there?

'Mental illness' is present in most workplaces and yet many of us don't really know how best to manage it.

We see reports of lost productivity, stigma, discrimination and stress ... but how can we do better?

Our Consumer Place – an innovative resource centre run by people with 'mental illness' and auspiced by Our Community – is putting together a comprehensive resource about these very issues, both for people with 'mental illness' and our colleagues and managers.

This won't be some shallow "10 easy tips", reassuring everyone that "people with mental illness are not dangerous or stupid" (der!), it won't be sugar coated, it won't contain pithy advice about how "'mental illness' is just like diabetes" – this resource will be addressing the tough, day-to-day challenges of managing 'mental illness' in the workplace: *How do we really do it? What about when things get particularly tricky?*

Importantly, it will be written from *a consumer perspective* – i.e. by those with lived experience of 'mental illness'.

The book will be useful both for people with 'mental illness' and those who work with and manage them.

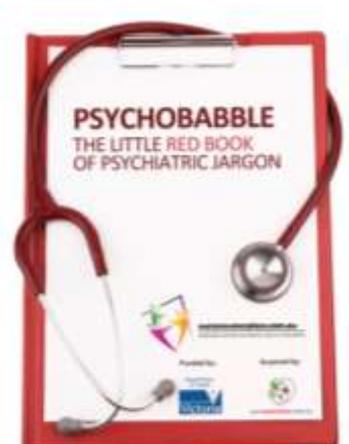
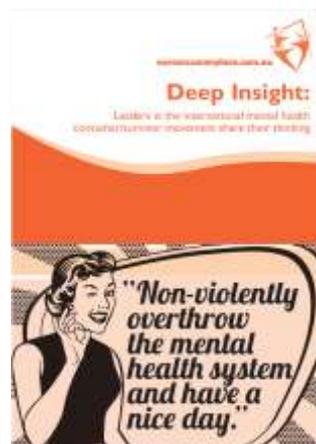
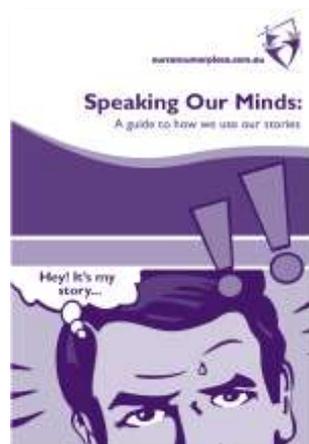
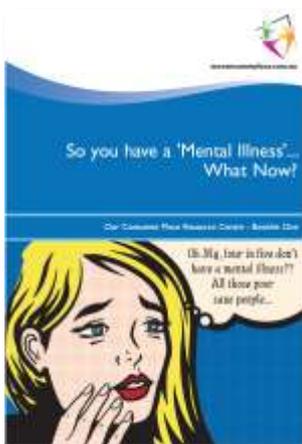
Some of the kinds of questions we will be addressing include:

- "Should I expect my colleague with a 'mental illness' get to work at the same time and do as much work as everyone else?"
- "I'm hesitant about disclosing my 'mental illness' – I'm worried it will affect my chances of being promoted. How do I decide if disclosing is a good idea?"
- "I feel like my colleague is taking her stress out on other people. I know she has a 'mental illness', but it still doesn't seem OK. What can I do?"
- "What can I do if I know what works for me in managing my 'mental illness', but the HR department is trying to make me do things that aren't actually helpful?"
- "I manage someone with a 'mental illness' and his performance has dropped significantly. I am afraid of discussing this with him as I don't want to make things worse."

We'd really love your thoughts, experience and questions – we've set up an online survey [here](#), where you can contribute as little or as much information as you'd like.

Our only request is that you please keep it real – we want to know what's really going on out there – the good, the bad and the confusing!

To see previous publications from Our Consumer Place, including an introduction to mental illness *So, You Have a 'Mental Illness' ... What Now?*, and a guide to telling our stories, please go to www.ourconsumerplace.com.au or click the links below.



[Back to Top](#)

9. Our Community 2012 Training Calendar now available

Our Community has a host of terrific training opportunities coming up in the first half of this year. Click on the links below to find out more or book a spot.

► [Introduction to Writing Winning Grant Applications \(Click here for details...\)](#)

Melbourne	2 March
Sydney	2 March
Brisbane	2 March
Perth	30 April
Adelaide	30 April
Darwin	30 April

► [Strategies for Sustainable Funding Seminar \(Click here for details...\)](#)

Melbourne	2 March
Sydney	2 March
Brisbane	2 March
Perth	30 April
Adelaide	30 April
Darwin	30 April

► [Advanced Grant Writing Seminar \(Click here for details...\)](#)

Melbourne	9 March
Brisbane	9 March
Sydney	13 March
Perth	2 May
Adelaide	4 May
Darwin	4 May

► [Diploma of Management \(BSB51107\) \(Click here for details...\)](#)

Melbourne	19-23 March
Sydney	7-11 May
Melbourne	18-22 June

► [Certificate IV in Governance – for Community Boards \(BSB40907\) \(Click here for details...\)](#)

Melbourne	20-23 February
Sydney	26-29 March
Brisbane	26-29 March
Perth	26-29 March
Adelaide	2-5 April
Darwin	2-5 April
Melbourne	15-18 May
Sydney	15-18 May
Brisbane	15-18 May
Perth	12-15 June

► [Secrets of Successful Boards Seminar \(Click here for details...\)](#)

Melbourne	16 March
Sydney	16 March
Brisbane	16 March

Perth 3 May
Adelaide 3 May
Darwin 3 May
Melbourne 14 May
Sydney 14 May
Brisbane 14 May

► **Women Achieving And Flourishing** ([Click here for details...](#))

Melbourne 1 May

► **Women Leaders – Taking the Next Steps** ([Click here for details...](#))

Melbourne 2 May

► **Training in Local Municipalities**

Bayside City Council

10 sessions on various topics in coming months – [See brochure](#) for further information

City of Stonnington

Writing Winning Grant Applications – 29 February
Boards and Managers – who does what? – 19 April
Contact: Amy Barclay 03 8290 1180

Gosford City Council

Writing Winning Grant Applications – 6 March
Strategies for Sustainable Funding (including Sponsorship) – 13 March
Contact: Ainslie Whitburn (02) 4325 8109

City of Yarra

How to promote, market your program – 7 March
Contact: Peter Mitten (03) 9205 5756

City of Belmont

Writing Winning Grant Applications – 30 March
Contact: Naomi Arbon (08) 9477 7191

City of Yarra Ranges

Winning Grants & Fundraising – 2 May
Finding funds and Getting Money – 6 June
Contact: Lou Sbalchiero (03) 9294 6335

Knox City Council

Winning Grants & Fundraising – 23 May
Contact: Jessica Anson (03) 9298 8351

If you're a Council employee and would like to arrange some training for your community organisations, please contact Alan Matic on 03 9320 6805 or email alanm@ourcommunity.com.au

[Back to Top](#)

10. Two Cheers for Volunteers!

We couldn't have put it better ourselves:

“Volunteering strengthens community connectedness and social cohesion. Social connections, such as those developed through volunteering, can provide meaning, purpose and satisfaction in people's lives. The experience of helping others can lead to stronger social ties with different groups of people, and to higher levels of trust. Volunteering can also contribute to broader community benefits, such as reduced crime.

“For individuals, volunteering brings health and wellbeing benefits, such as reduced stress, better physical and mental health and greater longevity. For example, the Longevity Project found that becoming a volunteer, getting involved in the community and being dedicated to things and people beyond oneself is a major predictor of a long life.

“Given the enormous benefits from volunteering, all sectors of society can do more to encourage and support it.”

But not, apparently, all that much. The Federal Government's National Volunteering Strategy is stronger on words of encouragement, like these, than actual expenditure.

This may be inevitable, of course. Volunteering is, by its nature, not particularly susceptible to government action. The urge to join your compatriots in working for the common good is so closely entwined with the common expectation – even the fundamental foundations – of a society that there aren't really any quick fixes.

The problems, too, facing the Australian volunteering scene go deeper than can be reached by simple remedies. As the graphs in the strategy paper show, young people are volunteering less than their elders did, and the median number of hours each volunteer puts in is dropping.

There's a general pressure on good works from rising insurance costs, which are founded, to some extent, on a rising national tendency to litigate injuries.

Mind you, there are things that the government could do to make the situation of volunteers worse, and there have been rumours flying around that workplace health and safety laws, now harmonised across the country so that the same laws and regulations apply in all states, have done just that, placing new burdens on Boards and Committees that will scare people away from standing for office.

The Chair of Safe Work Australia Chair, Tom Phillips, for example, has complained that “inaccurate and alarmist claims made about the new WHS laws could seriously discourage volunteers and potential volunteers from undertaking volunteer work.”

Luckily, there's nothing much to the rumours: after all, volunteer organisations are presumably as anxious to have safe workplaces as anybody, volunteers aren't any keener on being involved in industrial accidents than paid staff, and Boards that employ staff can't really beg off their responsibilities to their workers by pleading their own volunteer status.

The remedy to any possible liability is not to be unsafe, and that doesn't sound particularly unreasonable. And the government is meeting with NFP representatives to head off any issues that might arise.

At the first such meeting, it was agreed that:

“Volunteers aren't any keener on being involved in industrial accidents than paid staff.”

- *Safety is just as important in workplaces involving volunteers as any other and that everyone has the right to return home safe*
- *The scope of a volunteer's duty to act reasonably is largely as it was before the harmonised laws*
- *The application of any penalties for extreme actions was based on state laws in existence before the harmonised laws.*

Governments, after all, do have an interest in seeing as much volunteering as possible. Every good deed is a benefit the government hasn't had to pay for.

In other news, the Victorian Government has launched a new [Emergency Volunteer Register](#).

Victorians willing and able to assist during an emergency submit their details to the Register, with information from the register to be supplied to local councils and emergency organisations in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

While this sounds good, the difficulties of keeping such a register up to date are formidable, and it will be interesting to see how well it performs under trial.

To be fair, the government doesn't seem to be as concerned so much with getting suitable volunteers to the scene as with stemming the tide of unneeded or unsuitable ones.

"In addition to regular volunteers, during emergency or natural disaster events we often see a large spike in spontaneous volunteers offering support which has in the past inadvertently added pressure on local resources to manage ... During an emergency people will be encouraged to register details and wait to be contacted, rather than call local councils direct or travel straight to the affected area."

That more limited aim does sound achievable.

Meanwhile, Volunteering Queensland is trying the same thing with a smartphone app.

The app allows you to register to be an emergency volunteer, see current emergency volunteering opportunities and find out more about disaster preparedness.

Find out more [here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

11. What's in a domain name?

One of the problems that not-for-profits face is how to let people know that they are not-for-profits.

One of the possible ways is to have a .org URL on your website. Theoretically, this advertises your not-for-profit status: commercial businesses are .com; educationalists are .edu; not-for-profits are .org (at least, that's the theory).

There are three major objections to this set-up:

- 1) The average donor-in-the-street doesn't know what .org means – why should an 'organisation' mean 'a not-for-profit organisation', after all?
- 2) Not every organisation (not-for-profit or otherwise) follows this system – Our Community's GiveNow.com.au giving service is a not-for-profit, but has a .com web address, to take just one of many, many examples.
- 3) Worldwide, nobody actually checks that an organisation that signs up for a .org address is in fact a bona fide not-for-profit, and so there's the potential for sleazy operators to slip in and pocket any financial advantages involved.

There's now a proposal from the body that sits on the top of URL management (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) to create a new suffix, .ngo (for Non-Government Organisation). This will be monitored to ensure that only legitimate not-for-profits get on the roll.

Several lower-level organisations are fighting for the right to administer this new domain. For our purposes, though, two points present themselves.

1. **.ngo isn't that much better than .org when it comes to telling mug punters what you are.** Yes, hospitals and charities and sports clubs are indeed non-government organisations, but there's not much governmental about BHP, either, or the Dodgy Brothers. As before, you have to know the jargon, and most people don't (only a third of people know what a social enterprise is, and a surprisingly large sector of the public think that "not-for-profit" means "running at a loss").
2. **In Australia, we don't really have that free rider problem.** Yes, anybody can sign up for a '.org' name, but if you want '.org.au' in your web address, you have to fall into a pretty narrow definition; you must be:
 - a) *An association incorporated in any Australian State or Territory; or*
 - b) *A political party registered with the Australian Electoral Commission; or*
 - c) *A trade union or other organisation registered under the Workplace Relations Act 1996; or*
 - d) *A sporting or special interest club operating in Australia; or*
 - e) *a charity operating in Australia, as defined in the registrant's constitution or other documents of incorporation; or*
 - f) *a non-profit organisation operating in Australia, as defined in the registrant's constitution or other documents of incorporation....*

Here in the lucky country, we're already protected against shonks, and consequently we don't have much interest in what the ICAAN decides.

A deeper consideration is whether we really need the lines between 'not-for-profit' and the rest to be quite so heavily defined. As more and more social enterprises take shape (Our Community being one of them), more not-for-profits take on business-like activities, and some businesses sign up to make a more meaningful social contribution, the line between a profit-making entity and an organisation that serves the community is fast breaking down.

We reckon we'll just stick with .com for now.

[Back to Top](#)

12. Marketing Guru: Five rules for managing a PR mess

Abortion is a contentious issue, even more so in the USA than here. And not-for-profits getting involved in contentious issues need to be prepared for controversy.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure, America's most famous breast cancer charity, has just found out the hard way that if you don't prepare for controversy you're going to be beaten up when controversy comes to you.

Contemplation of what's happened to Komen over the past few weeks suggests some rules for how a not-for-profit should deal with controversy. Here's how it unfolded:

Planned Parenthood is a women's health organisation that offers poor women contraception, STD screening and treatment, cervical cancer screening, and, occasionally, abortions. Because of this last provision it's heavily criticised by the right-to-life movement.

A few weeks ago, Komen announced that it was cutting its grants to Planned Parenthood.

→ **Rule #1: It's not policies that make news – it's changes in policies.**



There was an immediate fuss, with complaints both from pro-choice groups (which objected to organisations that provided abortions being penalised for it) and breast cancer organisations (which objected to poor women being denied cancer screening services).

Komen responded that its decision had nothing to do with abortion – it was simply that Planned Parenthood was under congressional investigation, and Komen didn't fund organisations that were under investigation.

Nobody believed them; closer examination showed that Komen funded quite a few other organisations that were under investigation of one kind or another.

→ **Rule #2: Try and avoid the kind of excuses that are going to need their own excuses.**

All of that could probably have been absorbed by Komen, but the opposition that then came into focus was much more dangerous. Donors started shifting.

While many Komen donors withdrew their support, Planned Parenthood set up an emergency fundraising campaign and seemed to be coming out of it quite well. Lance Armstrong, for example, made a highly publicized donation of \$100,000, and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg gave a quarter of a million.

→ **Rule #3: Keep your donors on side. Don't do things that will annoy them.**

If Komen had been otherwise unassailable, it might have been possible to move along. By this time, however, critics had begun probing its other activities, and finding points of weakness.

Komen had been prone to bullying, sometimes suing smaller organisations that had dared to use the word 'cure' in their fundraising. Komen's push to attach the colour pink to everything in reach had occasionally brought it (some believed) too close to big corporations – after the "Warriors in Pink" Ford Mustang, with pink side stripes and leather seats with pink stitching, the pink pistol (pictured top right) advertised as the Walther P-22 Hope Edition handgun in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month was close enough to have been plausible (though it later proved to have been unauthorised).

Komen found itself having to devote a lot of resources to damage control.

→ **Rule #4: Whatever the trigger incident, be prepared to defend yourself across the board.**

In the end, the pressure proved too much, and Komen caved. It said it would continue to fund Planned Parenthood, the anti-abortion president for public policy left, and everybody returned to the status quo ante, only with bruises and fractures.

→ **Rule #5: Don't die in the last ditch.**



For a help sheet on how to manage a media crisis, visit the Marketing, Media & Post Centre – [click here](#). The Marketing Guru is an initiative of the Marketing, Media and Post Centre, the online resource provided by Our Community and Australia Post. Send your questions to guru@ourcommunity.com.au.

13. Community sector fraud falling: report

The steady decline in frauds suffered by Australian and New Zealand not-for-profits has continued, according to the latest edition of accounting and advisory firm BDO's *Not-For-Profit Fraud Survey* released this month.

However, an increase in groups not perceiving fraud to be a serious problem has seen BDO warn the sector against complacency.

The biennial BDO survey has, since 2006, tracked the prevalence of fraud in the Australian not-for-profit sector, as well as the types of frauds committed and the preventative steps and response measures put in place to deal with the issue.

This year's survey results, drawn from almost 650 responses, showed that the percentage of groups experiencing fraud had again fallen.

Only 12% of organisations surveyed had suffered fraud in the past two years, down from 15% in 2010 and 16% in 2008.

Overall, 75 survey respondents experienced a total of 330 frauds, totalling more than \$2.91 million. The average value of the frauds reported was \$8838.

Larger groups were more likely to experience fraud. Thirty percent of organisations with a turnover in excess of \$10 million had experienced fraud in the previous two years, compared to:

- 10% of groups with turnovers between \$1 million and \$9.99 million;
- 17% of groups with turnovers of between \$500,000 and \$999,999;
- 9% of groups with turnovers of between \$100,000 and \$499,999, and;
- 5% of groups with turnovers less than \$100,000.

The most common type of fraud was cash theft, which made up 40% of all incidents. While online payment fraud was uncommon (only three incidences), the ability for large amounts to be involved (an average of \$370,000 across the three frauds) made its potential for damage far larger.

About 25% of groups that had experienced fraud did not believe the full value of the deception was discovered.

The average duration of each fraud was just over 14 months.

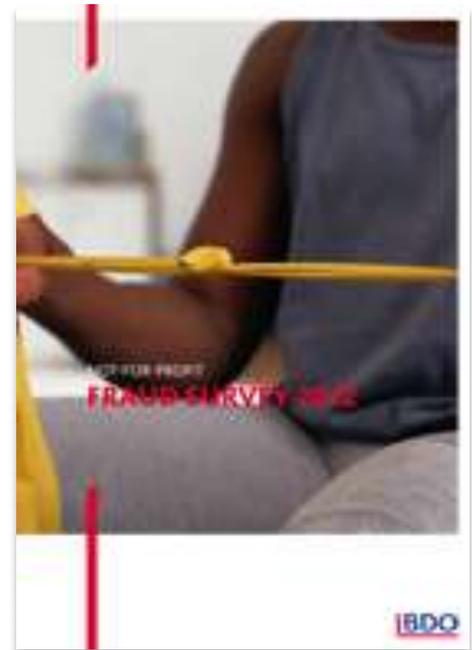
The "typical fraudster" was a female aged in her forties who was a paid employee in a non-accounting role, while only 9% of frauds were committed by volunteers.

Perception, prevention, detection and response

One interesting finding from the 2012 BDO survey was that a record low number of organisations now perceive fraud to be a problem. Only 8% of those surveyed thought fraud was a problem, down from 14% in 2010 and 20% in 2008.

According to BDO, while it was "an encouraging trend that individual organisations are identifying fraud as less of a problem, organisations should remain wary of the risk of fraud."

Interestingly, fewer groups than ever felt fraud was simply an inherent problem in the sector – only 59%, down from 70% in 2010 and 2008. Instead, more are identifying other factors they can act on – poor internal controls or no mechanism to report fraud – as issues.



Other findings included:

- External audits (72%), strong internal controls (71%) and ethical organisational culture (70%) were considered the primary factors in reducing the risk of fraud.
- Tip offs (34%) and internal controls (33%) were the most common ways of discovering fraud.
- 44% of respondents said they had a code of conduct, while 22% had a fraud control plan.
- Only 11% of respondents had implemented a whistleblower policy, despite tip-offs being one of the most common ways to discover fraud (34%).
- 57% of respondents did not report the fraud to the police, a figure that remained relatively consistent from 2010. Seventy one percent of groups did, however, sack the fraudster.
- 55% of organisations that suffered fraud did not recover any funds from the perpetrator.

The full survey results can be downloaded [here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

14. What would 'Big Society' mean for Australia?

The Centre for Policy Development has turned its gaze to the radical public sector reforms that are in full swing in the United Kingdom, under the brand 'Big Society'.

The public interest think tank is investigating what such reforms could mean for Australia.

“Although the rhetoric of the Big Society agenda sounds good, we have been monitoring its effects in the UK since mid-2011 and have seen a number of dangers involved in its approach,” CPD says.

“We will be discussing accountability and the quality of public services delivered under a Big Society approach. We will also look at its potential to deepen inequality, put a strain on not-for-profit organisations, and silence community voices.”

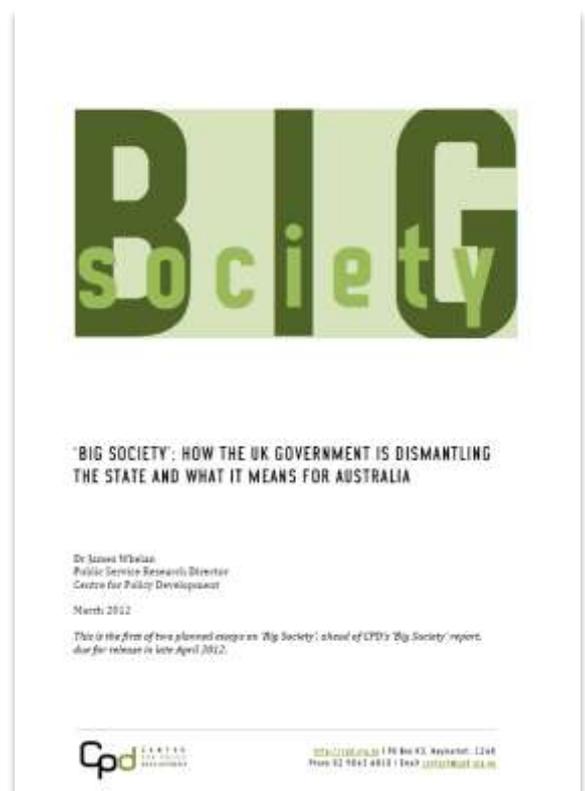
CPD says that although the term 'Big Society' is not yet commonly in use in Australia, initiatives along the lines of its UK agenda have been implemented in Australia, and may receive further support.

“We hope this next stage of our Public Service research will inform and energise debates about the future of public services in Australia.”

The first extract of CPD's report, *How the UK Government is Dismantling the State and what it means for Australia*, has just been released – it's online [here](#).

The full report is due out in late April.

You can read more about this work [here](#) and [here](#).



[Back to Top](#)

15. Community Calendar: 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 issue in Australia. Some events taking place in the next month include:



[World Naked Bike Ride Australia: 3-10 March \(check website for your capital city's date\)](#)

The World Naked Bike Ride aims to increase awareness of the vulnerability of cyclists on the road. It is also a peaceful protest against the vulnerability of cyclists, humanity and nature in the face of cars, aggression, consumerism and non-renewable energy.



[Clean Up Australia Day: 4 March](#)

Clean Up Australia Day encourages all Australians to take to their local park, beach, bushland or streets and help collect rubbish. Individuals and local groups can either organise a Clean Up Site or volunteer to join an existing Site.



[Sea Week: 6 March](#)

Sea Week aims to encourage appreciation of the sea. Each year a different theme is chosen, with this year's theme being "spotlight on marine science".



[International Women's Day: 8 March](#)

International Women's Day is a day to celebrate the contribution and achievements of all women. It is an opportunity to remember the barriers that women have broken through, and the accomplishments they have made despite barriers.



[A Taste of Harmony: 19-25 March](#)

A Taste of Harmony is a week used to celebrate the cultural diversity in the workplace. Workplaces are encouraged to invite their workers to bring in a lunch that represents their cultural background, and join in a multicultural lunch.



[Close The Gap Day: 22 March](#)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are still dying 10 to 17 years younger than other Australians. For that reason, more than 40 national organisations came together in 2006 to form Close the Gap – Australia's largest ever campaign to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



[Neighbour Day: 25 March](#)

Neighbour Day is Australia's annual celebration of community held on the last Sunday in March every year. Its aim is to encourage closer, friendlier relationships between neighbours and to strengthen communities.

[Back to Top](#)

GetUp unveils top 10 issues for 2012

Over the past few years GetUp has emerged as a formidable force in advocacy in Australia, harnessing the power of the crowd through online and advertisement-based activities.

The organisation, which claims around half a million Australians as members, has just unveiled its agenda for 2012, as informed by a survey of its members:

1. Investment in renewable energy
2. Protecting Australia's native forests
3. Stopping harmful coal seam gas mining practices
4. The fair treatment of refugees and asylum seekers
5. Protecting the Murray Darling basin
6. Constitutional recognition of Indigenous people
7. Ending corporate donations and reducing influence of lobbyists
8. Ensuring humane treatment of factory farmed animals
9. Safe and legal access to abortion
10. Poker machine reform

GetUp says the survey results will help set its agenda for 2012.

"We've already delivered more than 3,000 Valentine's Day roses to MPs for marriage equality, highlighted the mining industry's plans to take over our media in a #1 viral video and inside the pages of Fairfax, successfully encouraged Independent MPs to pass health insurance, and ramped up the fight to protect our native forests," the organisation says.

Find out more about GetUp's 2012 vision at <http://www.getup.org.au/vision-2012>

Indigenous Governance Awards 2012 now open

Organisations, projects or initiatives that accept effective Indigenous governance are being encouraged to apply for the 2012 Indigenous Governance Awards.

The awards were created by Reconciliation Australia in partnership with BHP Billiton to identify, celebrate and promote "effective Indigenous governance" – "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people making and implementing decisions about their communities, lives and futures".

The national awards highlight success in Indigenous Australia—strong leadership, good management, effective partnerships and brave, creative thinking. There are two award categories:

- A. Outstanding examples of Indigenous governance in Indigenous incorporated organisations
- B. Outstanding examples of Indigenous governance in a non-incorporated initiative or project (a new category this year)

The winners in each category will receive \$20,000 to further the development of their organisation, project or initiative, and the highly commended winners will each be awarded \$10,000.

In addition, finalists will receive a partnership package with a high-profile corporate partner, who will provide mentoring and assistance in an area identified by the finalist. All finalists will receive an award to commemorate their achievement.

Two members from each finalist organisation will receive funding to travel to Melbourne to attend the Awards presentation in October 2012. Applications are open until May 31, 2012. [Apply here.](#)



2012 Awards
now open
apply/nominate
now

Victorian Associations Incorporation Act reform process again under way

Changes to Victoria's Associations Incorporation legislation are now in train after the long-awaited Association Incorporation Reform Bill 2011 was introduced to the state's Parliament in December.

An initial round of reforms to the Act came into force in 2009. But a second, more major, set of reforms were delayed to allow time for a full revision of the state's Association Incorporation regulations and a re-write of the Model Rules for Victoria's incorporated associations.

Some of the key reforms contained in the Bill are:

- Extra duties for board members and other officers – including new and more stringent legal duties;
- Reforms to the annual reporting requirements and audit thresholds;
- Merging of the public officer and secretary roles;
- The removal of the current prohibition on trading;
- Changes to members' rights, clarifying their ability to view or gain access to certain organisational documents, as well as voting rights and proxy voting details; and
- Measures to clarify how disputes are addressed and resolved under the existing Act.

The Bill is expected to be debated before the end of June. Details on the new Model Rules, as well as any transitional arrangements in place for organisations electing to adopt these new Model Rules, are expected after the Bill passes through parliament.

International Year of Co-operatives

The United Nations International Year of Co-operatives is well under way, and the Australian Government has issued a \$1 coin to commemorate the occasion.

Australian co-operatives have been under pressure for years; older ones, such as the AMP, have been tending to demutualise into simple commercial companies (with the members becoming shareholders), while new enterprises tend to shy away from the co-operative format.

Nonetheless, Australia still has something like 2000 co-operatives (counting such similar forms as credit unions and mutuals) with \$83 billion dollars in assets.

And the Federal Government is somewhat belatedly trying to help build the sector as a counterweight to the stifling power of the big four banks. In a speech last year, anticipating the Year of Co-operatives, Assistant Treasurer Bill Shorten said:

“Credit unions such as CUA and People's Choice Credit Union are well known bank-substitutes, and better respected, in my estimation, than the Big Four, for the obvious reasons of looking after the customers and not paying the CEO 32 times the wage of Barack Obama. Customer-friendly foregatherings of mutual interest, you might say, not rent-seekers and exploiters of the working poor.”

Mr Shorten said co-operatives in the finance sector faced a range of challenges, but that the government saw a bright future for them “because we've been on the case”.

“These newly empowered and nourished entities will hopefully put competitive pressure on the big banks, some with interest rates 1% less than what the big leviathan predators are demanding now, which might impress, I think, some customers who can count,” he said.

“We are doing an awareness campaign about this, which will wonderfully concentrate Australia's mind.”

It's rather harder to find out what the awareness campaign actually consists of, or what the government is contributing, but it's possible everybody has been distracted by the necessity to observe the Labor Party Year of Continuous Backstabbing.

In any case, you can find out more about the International Year of Co-operatives at <http://www.2012.coop/>



Nominations open for Ricci Marks Awards (Victoria)

Nominations are open for the 2012 Ricci Marks Awards, which recognise the individual achievements and aspirations of young Indigenous people in the fields of training, education, arts, sport, culture and community leadership.

The awards, which are supported by the Victorian Government, will see \$5000 bursaries awarded to two young Indigenous people who have demonstrated leadership and initiative in the Victorian community.

The State's Minister for Aboriginal Affairs also has the option to award a separate \$500 Encouragement Award.

Community groups, schools, businesses and others are able to nominate young people for the awards. Nominees must be Indigenous, living in Victoria and aged between 16 and 25 as at January 1, 2012.

Nominations close on March 13. For more information, contact Petr Svoboda on (03) 9208 3255 or at petr.svoboda@dpcd.vic.gov.au.

Volunteer Awards (Northern Territory)

The 2012 NT Volunteer Awards are now open, with volunteers and volunteer groups able to be nominated in three different awards categories.

The awards are a collaborative effort between Volunteering SA & NT and the Northern Territory Government.

Awards categories are:

- The Chief Minister's Medal for Volunteering Achievement – which recognises a single volunteer's achievements.
- The Chief Minister's Medal for Volunteering Service – which recognises the long-term service and commitment of a volunteer.
- The Volunteering SA & NT Award for Organisational Excellence – which recognises a group's commitment to best practice in managing volunteers.

Groups can also recognise their Most Valuable Volunteer and arrange to have them presented with a certificate of recognition. Award categories also carry a cash prize which winners can donate to the not-for-profit of their choice.

The awards will be presented during National Volunteer Week in May, and nominations close on March 16 (for the major awards) and March 30 (for the Most Valuable Volunteer awards).

For more information, visit www.territorytogether.nt.gov.au.

[Back to Top](#)



17. Good Moves: Community Sector Jobs & Board Vacancies

The Community Jobs Centre is the place to find or advertise a community sector job in every state of Australia. It's free to browse the listings, or to be sent the weekly "Good Moves" jobs listing bulletin, while advertising a job costs only \$30. Visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs

JOB VACANCY LISTINGS (Paid Positions)

New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
Handyperson/Gardener	Tweed Valley Respite Service Inc	Details
Relationship Manager - Major Gifts	Neuroscience Research Australia	Details

Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
Community Relations Coordinator	Kingfisher Adult Learning Programs (KALP) Inc.	Details

Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
Office Manager	Lasallian Foundation	Details
Publicist/Communications Strategist	Scleroderma Victoria/Scleroderma Australia	Details
Therapeutic Practice Advisor	Child and Family Services Ballarat Inc (CAFS)	Details
Senior Research Officer	Brotherhood of St Laurence	Details
Chairperson	Penumbra Centre Inc	Details
Manager Drug Treatment Services	Latrobe Community Health Service (LCHS)	Details
Commercial Operations Coordinator	Ladder	Details
Programs Manager	Ardoch Youth Foundation	Details

www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs

[Back to Top](#)

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)

New South Wales

Vacancy	Organisation	
Treasurer	Shopfront Contemporary Arts & Performance	Details
General Board Member	North Coast Children's Home Inc (CASPA)	Details
Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, General Board Member	Cumberland Women's Health Centre	Details
General Board Member, Three positions	Tweed Valley Respite Service Inc	Details
General Board Member	Lifestart Co-operative Ltd	Details

Queensland

Vacancy	Organisation	
Treasurer, Secretary, 2 separate positions	Technical Aids to the Disabled (qld)	Details

Victoria

Vacancy	Organisation	
HR Committee advisor	Anchor Inc	Details
General Board Member	Indigenous Architecture Victoria	Details
Treasurer	TreeProject	Details
Treasurer	SPELD Victoria	Details
General Board Member, Finance Background	Common Equity Housing Ltd	Details
Chair, Secretary, General Board Member	Anti Racism Action Band Ltd	Details
General Board Member, Specialist Director and Sub Committee Members	Merri Community Health Services Limited	Details
General Board Member	Dress for Success Mornington Peninsula	Details
General Board Member	Advocacy in Education Research Group Inc	Details
Treasurer, General Board Member, 2 Board vacancies.	Bethlehem Community Inc	Details

www.ourcommunity.com.au/boardmatch

[Back to Top](#)

18. 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.

[Back to Top](#)

19. About Our Community

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise that provides advice and tools for Australia's 600,000 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 (comprising the online Knowledge Centres) and publishing house - accelerating the impact of Australia's 600,000 community organisations and schools
2. GiveNow.com.au - Helping individuals and businesses give more, give smarter, give better, Give Now!
3. [Australian Institute for Community Practice and Governance](#) - practical and accessible certificated training delivered locally through our training Institute
4. [Australian Institute of 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

[Back to Top](#)

