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Our Community Matters



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Bite into it: summer special edition



We wanted this issue of *Our Community Matters* to be one you can indulge in during the summer holidays, away from the burden of endless meetings and emails, of funding pressures and the daily grind.

So a couple of months ago, we invited readers to pitch their ideas for creative writing and essays on the theme “community” for this issue.

We received more than 450 submissions,

and from these we selected the nine writers published here.

They offer nine different perspectives on various aspects of community: what it is, what it means, what it’s like to live or work within, what threatens it, and why it’s worth celebrating.

We hope you’ll enjoy this big, juicy, refreshing edition. From all of us at Our Community, happy Christmas and happy holidays. ►



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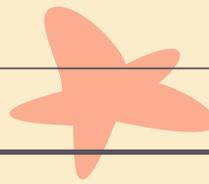
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Walking two paths

BY MARATJA DHAMARRANDJI

Yo nhämirr bukma! (Okay, how are you all!)

“Community” is a word used a lot in Aboriginal circles. I am a Yolngu (Aboriginal) man who lives and works in Galiwinku on Elcho Island in the Northern Territory. This is my community: the place I identify as my country, where I have connections to people and place; to past, present and future. “Community” for us means both relationships and people living in one place, maybe a town or wherever we are living. I feel that the word has a bigger meaning for us Yolngu than it does for Balanda (people of European descent).

Our moiety or kinship system gives us community wherever we are, with everyone. In my culture I know, or work out, how I am in relationship with other people, and then how I should interact with them. This is the way it has been forever, where no-one is an isolated rock in the sea, but everyone is connected and in community with everyone else. Our relationships then define our relationships and obligations to each other, and how or if we interact with each other. This is all contained within our madayin law. In Yolngu community

there are no orphans, as I have many women who are in a mother (ngandi) relationship to me, many grandmothers (mari, momu), many brothers (wawa), many sisters (yapa), etc, and the obligations of these roles are carried by each one. So our community, through relationships, is very strong.

Sadly, community now is very different from what it was in past generations. The pressures of the outside world are reshaping everything. The old folk talk warmly about the days when people lived in family groups on their homelands. Community was smaller and happier. Our law enabled us to live together and to trade and interact with other clans or tribes. Now, for a few generations, some people have been put together in the one place to create a “community”, and that has brought lots of pressure on everyone as well as the maintenance of culture. Culture, through ceremony and language, is our life. We are educated and disciplined (raypirri) as we sing, dance and share to learn what is expected of each of us as we live our role in our community. But the media (TV, film, radio, internet, phones etc) are all showing another way to live – even though it is counter-cultural ►



and pulling people in an opposite direction. Respect is countered by rudeness, modesty is countered by exposure, family is countered by individualism, etc. Community for us is under constant attack and it's creating a new way that is leaving some people lost between the two worlds of Yolngu and Balanda.

Some groups, such as ARDS (Aboriginal Resource and Development Services), are working with us in the best way. Their methodology is based on the use of the Aboriginal peoples' first language as a foundation for communication.

This approach is a respectful way to work with Aboriginal communities and makes it possible for us to engage as equals in the discussions about the issues that impact on our daily lives, issues such as these:

- The local economy and poverty
- Our health, in particular renal health and the desire to have dialysis available on our communities
- High levels of incarceration of our youth and the need for improved relationships with the police
- How we can engage with government to build our families based on traditional systems of kinship and discipline.

Western culture is invasive all day, every day. Choices are ours, but the pressure to walk another way is strong, and these choices have serious consequences for individuals and families – and for community.

To move to our “better future”, we need to draw on our *gurrutu* (relationships) rather than ignore them. Our youth need to see our elders making decisions based on our traditions of strong Yolngu governance. Too often, government doesn't recognise or even try to understand our systems. These systems have governed our way of life for millennia.

Can Yolngu walk the two paths to navigate the future? Will Balanda walk with us? Like the rest of the world, we need to create a filter for

what we consume so that it doesn't destroy us by pulling us away from who we really are. I know who I am (although there was a time when alcohol told me different). I know my place in my community and the place of everyone else. I consider and embrace some ideas but reject others, as I consider the value of something for me and for my family and community. The road of life is getting harder, as there are many detours to take us off course – movies, music, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, suicide, pornography, gambling, etc. These are not our traditional ways. They are all leading to people being lost and unsure how to get back to community where life can be restored.

Our culture, our community, our way is tried – tested – and true. It works! And when we can continue in our culture and law we will be a strong and healthy community in spirit, mind and body. ■

About Maratja



I am a Yolngu man from North East Arnhem Land, a family man living with my wife Dorothy Gapany (*pictured with Maratja*), three children, 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. We all live at the Galiwinku community on Elcho Island, Northern Territory. My clan and language is Djambarrpuynyu. I have had many roles here, including mediator, youth leader, and Uniting Church deacon. I work part time for the Northern Regional Council of Congress. I have been a long-term director of Aboriginal Resource and Development Services and have held the position of chair for one year now.



Calling Picola

BY SUSAN N CORRY

I wasn't always proud of my mother. She was so immersed in the local community that as a teenager in the 1960s, I found it difficult to distance myself from her. My mother was the glue that held our little district together.

She was always out there getting things done, raising money for some special cause or another, cooking food to take to dances, sporting events and church functions. Mum was loud and vivacious, which was highly embarrassing for a teenager trying to be groovy. I wanted her to be the quiet, retiring type who was seen but not heard.

I travelled to school by bus, which played the local radio station, and every morning the presenter named a town in the listening area in northern Victoria. The first person to call in from that town could request a song.

As soon as the announcer said "Picola", I knew Mum would call in. I visualised her at the kitchen sink listening to the radio.

"Goody!" she would yell as she swiped her hands on the dripping wet tea towel, threw

it over her shoulder and rushed to grab the Bakelite phone from its cradle in the den.

I slid down in my seat in the middle of the bus, where we Form One students sat. The front seats were reserved for primary school students, and the back seats were bagged by the oldest kids.

I hoped the loved-up bullies down the back weren't paying attention. I daren't glance around and risk their "What're you gawkin' at?" snarls and the glares from my older sisters for drawing attention to myself, and by default to them. The female *Bus Captain* cuddled up next to her current boyfriend, the male *Bus Captain*. She giggled as she opened her mouth and blew out a big pink balloon of bubble gum. It popped and deflated. She stuck out her pink tongue, dripping with saliva, and twirled the bubble gum around and around with it, teasing her boyfriend. She then deposited the pliable gum into his open mouth, which was moist with expectation. They amused themselves by transferring the gum back and forth on their tongues for the entire journey.

I hoped they were so involved with their flirting ►



that they wouldn't hear the radio. I felt myself burning up with shame. I crossed my fingers and prayed to God: "Please, don't let mum win." He ignored me. Again. Probably because I prayed mainly when I wanted something.

"And today's winner is Mrs Merrill Corry from Picola. Hello. Can I call you Merrill?"

"Yes, of course."

"And how are you today, Merrill?"

"Very well, thank you."

"And what's on today? Any plans?"

"Goodness yes. I have our AGM for the Picola Red Cross and then the Picola Hall committee meeting tonight. I'm president and secretary of both. And I'm also cooking for the shearers..."

"My, but you are busy Merrill. It's a wonder you had time to pick up the phone." The announcer chuckled. "And what is your song request today?"

I tried slipping further down my seat. But it didn't work. I was what they called a cinema nightmare: short legs and a long back.

"Could you please play 'Yellow Submarine' by the Beatles?"

"Oh my! Well, you are a with-it mum. We should have that one! Yes, here it is!"

The simplistic lyrics of the song seemed endless. I slid down even further. My bottom was just balancing on the edge of the seat.

"And that was 'Yellow Submarine' for Mrs Merrill Corry of Picola, our lucky winner today."

Oh no, please let it be over. Now. My stick-out ears were searing hot with embarrassment.

When the bus reached the front of our impoverished school I straggled down the steps trying to disguise myself behind the others. A motley lot of slime-green uniformed kids called out to me. Oh no.

"Hey, I heard your Mum on the radio today."

"Yeah. Me too."

I smiled, attempting nonchalance. But I was surrounded. No escape.

"Boy, she's modern."

"My mum probably would've requested Beethoven or something dreary like that."

"My mum hates the Beatles."

"Dad says they should cut their hair. Reckons they're a bad influence."

By the end of the day I was quite the celebrity. My mother was with-it. She was groovy.

But I still wished she hadn't made the call. ■

About Susan

Susan N Corry is regarded as a local in the Nathalia and district community. She was born here, and apart from absences for tertiary education and employment, she has lived in this part of Victoria all her life. (That's what happens when you marry your childhood sweetheart.) She is heavily involved in community activities, including the Nathalia U3A, the Community Choir, and the local football club. Susan also enjoys teaches Indonesian at the local preschool. She has facilitated a writing group in town for the past three years and they have just published the first book of their writings.

Susan also enjoys reading, travelling, gardening, dancing, scrapbooking (yes, so daggy) babysitting and spending time with her grandchildren. She has recently retired from teaching secondary English and Indonesian, and is currently writing her mother's memoir.





One good person

BY ALISON BROWN

This is a tale of synergy. A “what goes around comes around” kind of story.

My mother is 93. She lives in a modern, inner-city, high-rise, not-for-profit aged care “facility”. It’s not one of those get-me-out-of-here places you see on *Four Corners* with \$4 a day meals; it really tries to be “best practice”.

Mum’s place has artworks, picture windows, balconies and barbecues. It has a theatre, a hydrotherapy pool, policies, feedback loops and consultative groups. It tries. But tending to 150 residents of different backgrounds with different needs isn’t easy. It’s so not easy that one wonders why bundle them all up together in the first place. But that’s another story.

Mum was a librarian in Moonee Valley, a north-western suburb of Melbourne, for many years. For the last 10 she drove the mobile library van, delivering books to housebound readers from Glenroy to Fawkner. She picked and packed for all tastes: Le Carré and Christie, Cartland and Kerouac. Long after retiring she kept visiting a Polish refugee, did her shopping, took her to appointments and kept bringing books.

Mum and I are connected through language. When we first looked at aged care places our radar was up. Sometimes our “young” guide, in clickety heels, or uncomfortable suit, turned squarely to me. “So what does mum enjoy?”

No, no, she’s MY mum; that’s “your mother” to you. And hello, she’s right here. If they didn’t talk to her and used the unpossessed “mum” (like “baby”), the place was out.

The one she chose was brand new. There were some early disappointments. She couldn’t bring her car. There wasn’t an accessible

laundry. Food was a challenge. A piece of toast might arrive with centimetre-thick Vegemite and no butter. The carers, from every culture, knew other cuisines. Cooks came and went

We’re constantly thankful for the real café on the ground floor, opening to the world, where regular people come and go. The café is a lung. Breathing.

At first mum got out a lot: a regular Italian class, movies, lunches with friends. She lived in the real world and came home to roost. But friends also get old. And die. As her independence waned, she pinned hopes on organised trips and groups for the like-minded.

But where were they? She would hear about others with crossword brains on different floors. But because the floors are staffed horizontally, residents live largely by level. So she rarely met them. She joined a trip to the gallery to see the Great Masters. But loading and unloading a busful of people of multiple abilities left time for only a brief manoeuvre through the exhibition itself. The art of logistics.

She also hadn’t counted on the vast spectrum of dementia. From charming if nonsensical conversations to anger, fear and distress. Uncontrollable crying, smearing of faeces, nudity at dinner. As in a giant shared house, she interacts with all; people with names and families and rich pasts. Life. It’s what happens. But it wasn’t the company she’d imagined.

And the institutional smell begins to seep over the newness and the telly is almost always on.

But this is a synergy story. A coming together. A few suburbs away is a small second-hand ▶



bookshop, the kind that is stacked and packed, with piles on the floor you have to squeeze past, but where you might just stumble on the letters of Rilke, or a copy of Brat Farrar you want to re-read. There, also, are the owners, Tadhg and Ra. It is Tadhg who is moving towards us.

The name is Gaelic, pronounced Tige, like a Richmond player, meaning “man in the street”. He once wrote a book about Sharpie gangs in Melbourne, and has esoteric reading tastes. Although partial to American detective fiction, he’s reading about citizenship and chivalry in Victorian–Edwardian times. Stripped of its patriarchal overlays, chivalry is a form of care for those in need, a delight in doing noble and difficult things. He is inspired by the British Blue Labour movement’s focus on more local and community-based services.

Tadhg feels a call to volunteer.

He contacts Melbourne City Mission and joins the Community Visitors program, which connects him with the volunteering co-ordinator at mum’s. They think maybe he can start a book club. Tadhg considers this. He thinks that a whole book can be a challenge and knows it’s hard to get multiple copies at one time. He suggests a short story group, based on what he can find in the shop. The story gets copied off in large print and distributed across levels to the members. When Mum gets hers, she takes it to read to Betty, who is blind.

It starts with five women and now there are ten. Two blokes have joined. Tadhg thought they might like crime fiction but they quickly go wider: Olivia Manning, Saki, Isak Dinesen, Somerset Maugham. They like women writers and someone suggests Raymond Carver. Tadhg and Ra discuss and match the tastes as best they can.

The group meets fortnightly on Wednesday mornings. Tadhg kicks things off, but then they are away: discussing, disagreeing, opening

out their ideas. Sometimes they have coffee in the café downstairs. Twice they’ve had trips to the shop. One by one they wiggle their walkers among the stacks, taking their time, selecting what they like, then all having coffee next door. Ra says the shop visits are like a party.

The experience isn’t quite what Tadhg expected. His original notion of volunteering was bound up with duty and perhaps minor sacrifice. But what has happened is joy, expansion and flow. His world has been overlaid with theirs and theirs with his.

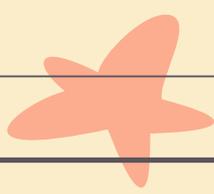
Aged care is a tough gig. It’s hard to deliver and it’s hard to live. And breathe. It needs to be porous with the world. It needs bigger lungs.

There is a movement called One Good Street that’s about neighbours assisting older people in their local area. We have a long way to go. But even one good person can make a difference. ■

About Alison

Alison has been a teacher, learning adviser, community radio producer, writer, editor and sock-seller, and many other things. She’s also been involved in lots of community-based stuff: a swimming program for Iraqi women, neighbourhood garden projects, school fetes galore, a circle of support for a friend seeking alternative housing. She loves theatre, novels and films and is interested in how we can create affordable mixed housing for people of different ages and abilities. During the 21 years Alison has lived in Melbourne’s inner north, things have changed a lot, for better and for worse, but the sense of community has remained strong.





School-based learning of a different kind brings insights into community

BY SOPHIE LENTON

As a student working towards a Bachelor of Social Work, I've been studying the concept of "community" for the past three years. Community development, community building, community breakdown and so on are part of the standard vocabulary of my lecturers and tutors. But the terms remained only abstract concepts, illustrated by statistics, until August this year, when I began my first practical placement.

I was assigned to a rural, geographically isolated community centre west of Sydney, and suddenly these abstract concepts started to seem very complex, very quickly.

Assigned to the Child, Youth and Family Team, I had no idea what to expect when I entered the centre on day one. Almost straight away, I was asked to attend a meeting at the local council to help plan a mental health event. I wasn't expecting to be thrown into it all so fast. I was bombarded by the sight of people from the council, mental health workers, community workers and all the ideas that trailed in with them. I started scribbling copious notes, and I realised how crucial it was going to be to carry around a notebook with me everywhere I went, just so I could keep up.

Day two of my placement was a baptism by fire. I met the other workers at one of the local

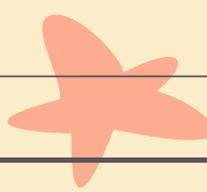
high schools, which I was told was one of the most difficult in the area. I had already been warned about the issues and struggles these young people were facing in their daily life.

I was heading off to a Schools Partnership meeting when a year eight kid followed me to the gate and asked, "Is it possible to swallow c*m?". I didn't respond, but I was shocked. At the meeting, I heard that some young male students were already exhibiting behaviours that could easily lead to abusive or violent tendencies in relationships in the future.

The kids loved hanging out with us – two students on placements and two workers – during breaks, happy to shock us further by telling us about their drug use or their dysfunctional family life or that they were planning to fight someone. It was not unusual to hear phrases like "I'm going to go smash his face in" or "I want to die".

As my 15-week placement continued, I was exposed to various community organisations and the ways they worked with people facing great difficulties. I saw just how many young teenage mums needed accommodation and support, how many broken families, how many financial, emotional, mental, relational and practical needs there could be within this one community. I discovered that the incredible team I worked with engaged powerfully in community. And I discovered this:

Community is complex. ►



Community is embedded deeply in people's hearts. People long for connection and security, safety and belonging. They long for a supportive place that they know will be there for them whenever they are in need. Community needs reach far beneath the surface.

Social work textbooks talk about "community" one-dimensionally, and from them I got the impression that there would be some kind of universal approach to practice. As hard as they tried, my studies didn't prepare me for the reality of the needs of a community in western Sydney. A community full of families, full of culture, full of heart, but also a community riddled with struggle, mental health issues, and groups and individuals facing great adversity. Now I know that multiple approaches and great flexibility are essential.

As part of a unit of study called Professional Practice, we had had to participate in classroom role plays about group work and case work. They seemed pointless and awkward: fake, clinical and full of assumptions as we pretended to comprehend what it was like to be a client within a group work setting.

In contrast, as part of my placement, I had the opportunity to help co-facilitate and run resilience programs for young female high school students. Working with youth is unpredictable, so workers need to be flexible and to think on their feet. One young girl opened up to the group about her struggles with mental health problems and alcohol, which had caused her to become violent and psychotic. She is in year 10.

On placement, I also participated in Reclaim the Night, which saw a group of community members and community workers walk down the main streets together reclaiming a woman's right to walk alone at night. We remembered the many women and children

who had been killed in acts of domestic violence this year alone. I witnessed the community making a show of great strength, fighting against oppression and rejecting inaction.

I learned far more during the 420 hours of my placement than I had in two and a half years of classroom study. I learned just how crucial it is for community organisations to be directly linked and to work together in order to address community needs in a holistic way. I learned that it is essential to examine the roots of a community in order to understand how to help it to grow. ■

About Sophie

Sophie Lenton is 22 years old and has just finished the third year of a Bachelor of Social Work degree at the University of Sydney. She grew up and lives in the lower Blue Mountains and attended Wycliffe Christian School. For as long as she can remember, she has had a passion for people, a fact that led her to her current work and studies. Sophie has worked for the past four years as a disability support worker with youth and young adults, supporting them to grow, develop, learn and become part of their local community. She also volunteers with her local church youth group, mentoring girls throughout their high school years, and has been a leader at a number of youth camps. Sophie has a passion for justice and equity for all, in Australia and across the world, and believes that building community is very important.





The grantwriter and the drought: a poem

BY LOUISE ROBINSON

The shining blue serpent that had once split
the town
Meandered less, muddy and brown
The rain hadn't come, there was work to be
done
And the feed remained in the ground.

The load it was heavy, no risk to the levee
A dry and dusty ordeal
But it only takes one to get off their bum
And to hold a whole-township appeal.

It's often been said that those thoughts in
your head
Are what separate average from great
To eloquently tell of proud farmers in plight
Needs a writer's vocabular state

To paint pictures so bright that the office
but might
Give a yes to the great opportunity
It takes the skill of a poet to feel it, to show it
The heartbeat of any community. ■

About Louise

Louise Robinson is the general manager of Many Rivers Regional Housing, an Aboriginal corporation that manages tenancies and properties from its base in Kempsey, New South Wales. A former CEO of the Nambucca Heads Local Aboriginal Land Council, she has also had 15 years of experience in a grant-writing role for a Bowraville not-for-profit.

Louise used to be a beef cattle farmer, and remembers taking bucket baths and checking the level in the water tank.

She now lives in town on the mid north coast of New South Wales, and has donated her payment for this poem to the charity Drought Angels.





Building community one hashtag at a time

BY ELISSA HILL

Many people argue that social media is eroding our sense of community and our connection with others. But I disagree.

When harnessed effectively, social media can bring people together in a way that would simply not be possible on the same scale in the offline world.

When the announcement broke in November 2017 that the majority of Australians had voted yes to same-sex marriage, Twitter was instantly awash with rainbow colours. Using the hashtag #MarriageEquality, people flooded social media with messages of congratulations, revelling in the collective power of the #VoteYes movement. It didn't matter that we had never met the vast majority of people who had voted yes with us. In that moment we were a community of people who had made history, united by our belief in marriage equality and known to each other because of hashtags.

Hashtags were designed by engineers as a social media search tool – type a hash sign (#) before a word or phrase, and presto, you've got a hashtag. But social media users quickly harnessed them as a tool for activism and community-building. Hashtags enable people to easily find others who share their views or interests, creating online communities of kindred spirits.

I witnessed the power of hashtags throughout the marriage equality debate. At a time when public discourse on the issue was often discriminatory and sometimes downright hateful, social media posts tagged #MarriageEquality, #LetLoveWin and

#LovelsLove offered a counter position of love and solidarity. These hashtags fostered a supportive and empathetic online community for the many people experiencing distress in the lead-up to the vote.

In recent times, hashtags have been at the centre of some of the world's largest social movements, including #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter. Closer to home, #BringThemHere has rallied a nation of people calling for refugees on Nauru and Manus Island to be resettled in Australia.

Social media hashtags offer all of us a global platform where we can share and amplify concerns about injustices. They help us see that we're not alone, and they give us hope that there are many others who are fighting for change just like us. And when we start to see the whole planet as our community, anything is possible. ■

About Elissa

Elissa Hill is a Melbourne-based freelancer specialising in health and not-for-profit communications. She has a passion for helping not-for-profits thrive and has spent the past six years working with a range of organisations to get their social change messages out into the world. More: elissahill.com.au.





Bringing back the spark: how to avoid burning out

BY STEPHEN WRIGHT

Everyone has a story about work-related burnout. It might be your own story or that of someone close to you, of feeling chronically drained and emotionally exhausted, of cracking under the pressure of work, of confronting what feels like a professional disaster. The community sector, in particular, **is notorious** for burning people out.

There are fewer stories about how burnout can be stopped, and even fewer stories to help us to understand why burnout arises at all.

Avoiding burnout is often framed in terms of looking after yourself. Get more exercise, more sleep. Eat more vegetables, drink less alcohol. Practise yoga, talk to a friend, meditate.

Burnout then becomes an individual failure, a list of all the ways we didn't look after ourselves.

Community services workplaces are often communities in themselves, though perhaps this isn't acknowledged as often as it should be. I didn't acknowledge it myself until a few years ago, when the problem of burnout became apparent in me and my colleagues.

The approach of burnout is a weird feeling. You have an increasing sense of being stretched out, or become plagued by feelings of guilt, or start to feel hardened or cynical. But burnout can also manifest as an addiction to work, an inability to switch off to office politics, a kind of inner revving that just keeps ramping up. And you can't really remember what the turning point was when it all started to go south, when work became so joyless.

In my own work, in a program that intervenes when men use violence and abuse in the home, and that supports women who live with violence, the pressures can be intense. Nearly all violence against women and children (and men) is carried out by men, so in working face-to-face with men who use violence, workers can feel as though they are right at the source of the problems that so many women and children experience. The safety of women and children, the precarious nature of many of their lives, the ways in which institutional responses fail them, are front and centre, in the office, in its interview rooms, every day.

And so burnout can – and in my own workplace did – come from several sources: from feeling powerless when violence against women and children is still endemic; from the knowledge that women die every week because of male violence; from the anxiety induced by funders that keep funding precarious and short-term; and from the basic grind of continual close interactions with men who don't take responsibility for their violence.

As the manager of the service I work in, I felt my responsibility for my colleagues' well-being keenly. This sense of responsibility, if it is accompanied by inflammatory guilt and shame, can itself be an indicator of burnout.

When a number of crises occurred at work, it became obvious to me that we needed to re-think a whole lot of things. My workplace, like most, was organised hierarchically, so as the manager I could begin to make changes that ►



others couldn't. But I didn't want to make them unless my colleagues, too, felt they had the power to make changes. Managerial edicts or policies wouldn't be enough.

First of all, we had to acknowledge the bigger political picture. In a climate of global austerity, the notion of righting social wrongs and improving well-being has been hollowed out. Community services have been starved at the very time they find themselves trying to address a tsunami of suffering. And because of this, our places of work, which have the potential to be places of well-being and communities of care, can too easily become sources of burnout.

Could we build something that allowed us to stay sane within that picture and do the work we wanted to do? Would it be possible to build a small community of care that supported and enabled its workers to better care for themselves, so that efforts at personal care weren't always derailed by the stresses of working in an underfunded sector doing difficult work?

It seemed time to ask some difficult questions about how we functioned. How differently would our organisation do things if we began to explore ways of decision-making that were collective, democratic and accountable? What sort of culture of trust and transparency would we need to build, and what would it look like? What unexamined privileges would a manager have to give up? If all the significant decisions the organisation made were collegiate and grounded in the need to care for workers, how would that change things?

The answers to all those questions ended up being variations on the following: we all got better at caring for each other (and so happier), and when we got better at caring for each other, we got better at doing our work. In other words, we began to enact a kind of professional care that I can only describe as "community".

That's not the same as saying "We're just like a family here", a statement that often fills me

with dread. What it means is that previously marginalised voices are more centred, and a lot of organisational decision-making is opened up to the group.

Consequently, everyone can make suggestions that challenge the way the organisation works (some of them are startling). The ways people are accountable to each other is up for discussion, and so is how working conditions can be improved. Not everybody wants to be a manager, but everyone has ideas about how practices can be changed for the better. And the personal projects of self-care became less troublesome, less of a struggle, more of a joy.

To make room for those ideas, people need time and space. They need forums. And making forums for thinking and decision-making has become key for us in our work. That's not the same as having meetings. But it does mean re-purposing meetings. Whenever we have a problem now, we think about the forums – temporary or permanent – we can create to solve it.

This all requires commitment and resourcing, often in the form of time and space, which also means money. That is unavoidable. But the expenses are relatively small, in the scheme of things. And after all, it's hard to put a price on care and well-being. When we do, that's when we get the thing we call "burnout". ■

About Stephen

Stephen Wright is a community services manager for an NGO that works with men who use violence and abuse in the home. His novel *A Second Life*, published by Brio, won the 2017 Viva Novella Prize and the 2018 Woollahra Literary Prize for Fiction. Stephen has written extensively for the literary journal *Overland* and has received numerous awards for his essays.





A Village of Women

BY VOW WRITERS

The women who wrote this collection of work are all part of VoW Writers, a writing group based at Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre on the northern New South Wales coast.

VoW Writers is a subgroup of **Village of Women** (VoW), a community of women who “vow” to support each other to learn new skills, share their strengths and raise funds. Most importantly, they vow to work towards improving their own situation and each other’s by building a strong, cohesive, not-for-profit collective.

Between them, women in the group have experienced many challenges, including domestic and family violence, chronic health issues and sole parenthood.

As a result of VoW, individuals who once felt isolated are now part of a resourceful, supportive friendship network that has transformed their lives.

VoW Writers is mentored by Rosemary Nissen-Wade, a published poet and former creative writing teacher. Some of the names in this collection are pseudonyms.

Claire

After 50 years of marital abuse, I landed in hospital. I knew I couldn’t back down this time, slink back to the house (it had never been a home) and – as I’d thought a few days before – just sit in the house for the next 20 years until it was time to die.

A chain of events led me to Pottsville, everything fitting together like a beautiful

jigsaw. I learnt not just about the support and acceptance in the group, but other activities this remarkable bunch of women do. I am gently encouraged to participate. There’s a feeling of belonging.

I looked at a blouse label and thought it said WOSH. Yes, I thought, I can now live maybe 30-plus years in WOSH: “With Out Shit Happening”. Thank God for the Village of Women. ►



Lily

A year ago my life was both over and just beginning. But all I saw was that it was over. After four years in an emotionally abusive, manipulative relationship, I was my worst fear come true – a single mum with a young child, living in a caravan.

I struggled for over two years to find the help reputedly available for women leaving domestic violence. The Murwillumbah Women’s Centre closed; I was lucky to find OTCP (On Track Community Programs). Through them I found my counsellor, who opened a world of amazing women at Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre. I had never been interested in support groups, but I went to a meeting. Though I was in tears listening to others, it was safe and felt like a big hug – and I’d never met those women before!

Next time I braved a Village workshop, I ended up showing the women how to make fabric flowers. I’m not confident as a teacher, but with sewing a new passion, and everyone supportive, it was like craft and cuppas with friends. We come to the group to receive, but I realised the inspiration I was giving.

The thing I notice in all of us VoW women is resilience. We keep going, every day, and are learning to love ourselves again.

April

Each torn down by the storms of life’s weather, I thought you were losers – till I saw you together.

Magic happened as you talked, listened, wept
You each knew how to suffer, support and accept.

A bond of deep love and compassion was growing

You each made a vow to keep your love flowing.
A community was born.

Kym

I come to the Village of Women through my support network for my children. I come to the Village of Women to find balance and remember and honour the amazingness of women and our incredible ability to love and nurture beyond measure while being an unstoppable force for our cause.

The Village of Women is for women everywhere, who sometimes need a hand to reach out and lift them up when they face their darkest night. The Village of Women is for women to remember their value, to offer solace and accept support when needed. I’m grateful and honoured to be invited and accepted as part of the Village of Women, an enterprise with incredible potential for making a difference ▶



in a world which seems to have forgotten that nurturing begins with the mother. This is where we begin, this is where we need to heal, at the core, the origin, the source. A world in which all women can feel safe and supported, able to be who they are born to be, will be a world with less violence, less anger and less hate.

I am saying "yes" to that!

Maryanne

Empty of meaning
alone with one thought:
Battle the drudgery
and lack of support.

Honey butter bread
in soft white triangles;
drop them at school.
Desperately try to untangle
mountains of paper,
preparing for court.

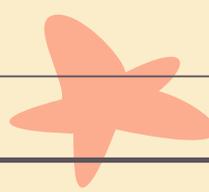
Just call the friend,
start at the top
of that list of people
who know how to stop
the landslide of secrets

the feeling of shame
the struggle we know of,
the one without name.

Coffee and chats –
just what's on order.
Finding my soul's self,
I'm crossing that border.

Bronwyn

People, my people, our people
Finding strength within and without
Where polar opposites feel at home
And faces light up
When new folk, kindred, arrive,
Where bonds are formed
And soulmates are found.
Together we struggle, together we strive.
Free to be me again, free to be connected
Letting others in and around
Holding hands, sharing frowns
Giggling and dancing
Laughing out loud
With my people, our people
No shame, no worry
Just love, light, and great fun. ■



Restoration

BY JESSAMYN WRIGHT

I have three kids. Two of them are adults now, and the youngest is four. When my middle son was 10 or 11, I used to take him tree planting with a local volunteer group called Treeforce. We'd wander up in the early morning and have fun planting trees, looking at the river and chatting to people we knew. My son didn't have many friends, but one of them came, and it was really nice for me to see him hanging out with his mate. We'd work, explore and enjoy the morning tea that Treeforce provided. Between the chatting, exploring, and eating I don't know if we planted many trees, but somehow that wasn't the most important thing.

The years passed, and my son went to live with his dad. My partner and I continued to go to Treeforce sessions every now and then. I remember going to Coles after one session – I had a shaved head at the time, and he had a beard, and we looked like haystacks, completely covered in mulch and dirt. Other shoppers parted like the Red Sea to let us through and we practically had had the aisles to ourselves, which has never happened before or since.

This year, my middle son turned 21 – he's grown from a lonely child and teenager into a thriving young man who is studying nursing, socialising, playing sport and helping out at the uni's community garden – and my youngest turned four. I don't know why I thought of Treeforce again, but I took my little one and my partner to another of their sessions. The same coordinator was still in charge. We weren't planting trees this time, but weeding and mulching. My son grabbed a small pick and we hacked out guinea grass from sandy soil. He enjoyed trying to smash logs and lever up

rocks, and we got a whole row of guinea grass out of an old, unused road. I was going through a really stressful time, and I found hacking out grass amazingly therapeutic. But something bigger was going on.

I looked at the pile of hacked-out grass – my son and I did that, together. I looked at the forest, planted only three years before by the volunteers – we are helping this forest. I looked at the kind, generous people helping restore country on a Sunday – we are part of a group of kind, generous people. I looked again at the forest, and thought about the birds, and insects, and air, and climate – we are helping. We are helping.

My son decided he wanted a pick for Christmas. ■

About Jessamyn

Jessamyn, a former freelance journalist and radio producer, has extensive digital, writing, and audio experience and has worked as communications professional for a range of not-for-profits for more than 10 years.

She started volunteering when she was a teenager, and over the years has volunteered for the Wilderness Society, Amnesty International, Playgroup Queensland and Treeforce. She is also a member of the True Relationships and Reproductive Health (formerly Family Planning Queensland) Consumer Advisory Group.

Jessamyn has a Bachelor of Arts majoring in journalism, politics and history, and is currently completing a Graduate Certificate in Social Impact.

2019

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Where not-for-profits go for help



Stop blaming politicians, start getting active



BY DENIS MORIARTY, MANAGING DIRECTOR, OUR COMMUNITY GROUP

Sometimes, a few ripples can start a wave.

Having worked most of my professional life with community organisations, I know that's where real change starts.

Movements are called that for a reason, because they are driven by communities of interest all pushing in the same direction. And it's almost always just one or two people who spark them.

Many wrongly assume it's just the rich and politically powerful who call the shots.

I know people are sick of politicians and powerbrokers and the games they play. I know many of us feel despair and disgust at the current state of politics.

But while there are no simple solutions to the challenges facing our society, the fact is that getting involved and getting active is the only way things will change.

Too many of us turn away from the bitter taste of politics and are left to just grumble about the things that bother us, convincing ourselves that nothing we do will make any difference.

But try telling that to teens Milou Albrecht and Harriet O'Shea Carre, both 14, from Castlemaine in central Victoria.

The pair – inspired themselves by Swedish schoolgirl Greta Thunberg – sparked a wave of protest by inviting Australian kids to join their “Strike 4 Climate Action”, which saw cities overflowing with students – also mostly girls – calling for policy action.

With clever placards such as “Procrastinating

is our job not yours”, #ClimateStrike trended its way to the top of news bulletins.

And the campaign isn't going to stop. Students are going global with this fight and deploying an arsenal of social media savvy.

From Canberra to the farming communities crippled by drought, climate change is an issue we've got to tackle. And walking away isn't going to help.

The students have instinctively shown what I've seen before. If existing structures aren't working for you, then it's up to people to join a movement, or start something themselves.

Time and again, I've witnessed the fact that people have more power than they realise.

Rosie Batty became Australian of the Year for using her voice to address the family violence crisis. Florida teen Emma Gonzalez started a national campaign after surviving a high-school shooting that killed 17 others.

There are thousands more out there, pushing back against the bad and the corrupt, using social media to engage and get others involved.

The #MeToo movement began with one person, then spread from one to another, like an infection of change.

Of course, a movement must have substance. There need to be enough people who are concerned, who've experienced the same thing, and who want things to be better, as with the marriage equality campaign.

And there needs to be a leader, or leadership ►



Left to right: Castlemaine students Nimowei Johnson, 13, Harriet O’Shea Carre, 14, and Milou Albrecht, 14, led climate change action at Victoria’s Parliament House last month.
Photo: Julian Meehan.

group – a person or persons prepared to speak out, to complain, or find themselves realising: “I’ve had enough. I have to do something.”

If you’re starting or part of a movement, you might be amazed at who else gets on board. But a warning: be prepared to be buying into trouble for your efforts. That’s politics. It is the price than needs to be paid, because the only way to fix systemic problems that trouble us is to get involved.

Of course, just because politics has always been combative doesn’t mean it has to continue that way. That’s why I would urge far more women to stand for politics – whether it’s local, state or federal– so we can make it less blokey, less abusive, less combative.

I’m sure many more women would enter the fray if room was made for them, and if the culture wasn’t so toxic. Those changes could happen tomorrow, if state and federal leaders wanted.

Nominating for political office is not for everyone though. So for starters, why not join the board of a community group that fits your beliefs and values, and have a say in how it’s being run?

You might volunteer, or protest, or lobby, or write letters, or dip into a social media campaign and help the movement you believe in to shift things from the status quo.

Whether you’re passionate about the environment, indigenous rights, animal welfare, foster care or any number of causes, you can channel that feeling into something positive. There are so many groups with different values and strategies. Some lobby for systems change; others are focused on helping survivors.

I say start somewhere. And if you don’t like the group, move on and find another group that you do.

It doesn’t take money, but it does take time and it does take passion. And most of us have a little of both to spare. ■

Great grant: Women's Leadership Development Program

The Women's Leadership and Development Program, funded by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, funds one-off or small-scale projects. It aims to improve outcomes for Australian women in five key areas:

- economic security
- workforce participation
- leadership
- safety
- international engagement.

Up to \$650,000 is available this financial year. Broadly speaking, grants may be used for project costs, development of resources, research, staff salaries, materials, and travel within Australia.

Eligibility

Among the entity types eligible to apply are:

- companies incorporated in Australia
- companies incorporated by guarantee
- incorporated associations
- registered charities and not-for-profits
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Corporations

Other eligibility criteria apply too.

More information

For more information, and details of how to apply, visit <https://www.fundingcentre.com.au/grant/G08796> (Funding Centre log-in required). This round closes at 8pm on June 28, 2019. ■



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The Funding Centre is an Our Community enterprise. Funding Centre membership starts at just \$85 per year for individuals. Join now: www.fundingcentre.com.au/subscribe.



Watch now: PhD candidate Carolyn Wallace outlines her research about people who have a knack for connecting other people with services.

Plugging into “the connectors”: a powerful resource for your community organisation

BY MATTHEW SCHULZ, JOURNALIST, OUR COMMUNITY

You’re sure to know a handful of them in your community: they’re the “connectors”.

Connectors are the precious people who know many others and get things done. They have an uncanny ability to connect people, or to link them to resources, or information, or services. Often they’ll notice people who aren’t being included and they’ll do something about it.

Sound like someone you know? Maybe it’s you.

Now an Australian study into the role of these special individuals has described the incredible resource and potential they represent, particularly when it comes to engaging with people in the community whom services find the hardest to reach.

Swinburne University of Technology PhD candidate Carolyn Wallace has become fascinated by these fixers, who can, she’s written, “facilitate the flow of ideas,

information, activities and relationships” across organisations, and across social and cultural boundaries.

Her research is examining:

- what characterises local community connectors
- how they make connections and span boundaries between people, organisations and resources
- the role of technology and social media in connections, and
- perceptions about the connection between health and community services and their communities.

Read more online: go to www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/tools/?articleId=7540. ■

Free analytics tool released to not-for-profits

BY MATTHEW SCHULZ, JOURNALIST, OUR COMMUNITY

Not-for-profit directors wanting to know more about the performance of their organisations should be aware of a new free workplace analytics tool.

The online tool has been developed by Dr Ramon Wenzel at the University of Western Australia's Centre for Social Impact (CSI).

Data collected from organisations will contribute to the Australian Not-for-profit Workforce Study, which the CSI intends to share widely.

CSI research from 2015 shows that proper investment in governance training for not-for-profits generates a 6:1 return on investment in terms of the value and impact created.

The CSI now hopes to build on that 2015 research by harvesting more data about not-for-profit performance for its workforce study. In return, it will provide that information to participating organisations to allow them to benchmark themselves.

The CSI describes its workforce study as the country's first large-scale effort to "identify what matters most for making not-for-profit work more developmental, healthy, meaningful, and productive".

The centre's research goals cover:

- Learning in the sector, including developing talent, innovation and impact
- The well-being and engagement of staff and volunteers
- Core competencies such as the knowledge, skills and abilities needed in the sector
- The diversity of the sector, and needs of the workforce in different areas



Watch now: Dr Ramon Wenzel explains key findings so far of his research into the benefits not-for-profits can achieve by investing in governance training.

- Better job design for not-for-profit work, and
- How to develop and share leadership.

The centre says its analytics tool and dashboard provides organisations more than 30 metrics they can use to compare themselves with others.

The product is free to all Australian not-for-profits.

The study has the financial support of the Australian Research Council, EY (formerly Ernst and Young), Australian Scholarships Foundation, and Australian Executor Trustees, although no data is shared with those partners.

More information

[Not-for-profit Workplace Study and analytics tool](#)

[Why investing in your NFP workforce is critical to your culture](#)

Governance training scholarship opportunities: see **[page 31](#)**. ■

Study seeks to arrest free fall in grassroots leader numbers

BY MATTHEW SCHULZ, JOURNALIST, OUR COMMUNITY



Researcher Christel Mex has put the spotlight on what prevents community leaders from signing up to board positions.

Bad board behavior, red tape and “a lack of time” are behind a sharp drop in the number of volunteers putting their hands up to lead smaller not-for-profits.

South Australian research has put a microscope onto the leadership of “grassroots associations” to find out what can be done to arrest the decline and to maintain vital organisations that provide critical social connections.

The study by Flinders University PhD candidate Christel Mex – who is also a councillor with the City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters – included a survey of 1500 SA associations and lengthy focus group interviews.

Her disturbing findings included a significant decline in volunteer numbers, which threatens future leadership of smaller not-for-profits.

The survey found two thirds of surveyed organisations were battling to recruit fresh faces. The organisations included sporting clubs, conservation groups, service clubs, community

bands, art and craft groups, and local historical societies.

Ms Mex recently published selected figures, along with a focus group analysis, in [**Stepping Up or Stepping Out? Recruitment and retention of volunteer leaders in grassroots associations.**](#)

Her analysis revealed that the top barriers to new members included:

- bad behaviour inside grassroots groups
- red tape – both from governments and from organisations themselves
- a perception that potential volunteers don’t have enough time.

Read more: An extended version of this article was published in the November 2018 edition of [**Community Directors Intelligence**](#), the member newsletter of the Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA), an Our Community enterprise. You can [**join ICDA now**](#) from \$65 per year. ■

Why donating to charity beats unwanted gifts at Christmas

BY CHRIS BORTHWICK, THINKER IN RESIDENCE, OUR COMMUNITY

We're told, "To give is better than to receive". And with Christmas rolling around again, the amount of giving in the mix is stepping up – it's estimated that Christmas (presents, food, drink) costs Australia \$48 billion every year, nearly double what we spend on the army, navy and air force combined.

A hundred years ago, the average Australian had very little in the way of possessions. It was possible to buy the love and affection of a small child with just an orange and some nuts in a stocking over the fireplace. In 2018, PlayStations, scooters, bicycles and gift cards **top the list** for kids. For adults, gadgets of all kinds prevail (electronic foam fitness **roller**, anyone?)

The problem with Christmas presents, as a concept, is that one of two things is generally true:

(1) the giver has given you something they wanted themselves, which means you don't want it or need it

(2) the giver has given you something they know you're interested in, which means you've already got two of it.

Dissatisfaction is almost guaranteed.

We have a statistical foundation for this pessimistic statement, too. In December 2017, the **Australia Institute polled** 1,417 Australians about Christmas gifts and waste. The sample was representative by gender, age, and state and territory. Here's what the research found:

- Three quarters of respondents (75%) like to buy Christmas gifts.
- However, 42% would prefer that others not buy them gifts.
- Around a third (31%) said they expect to receive gifts they won't use or wear.

When you start with a figure of \$48 billion (minus food and drink), wasting even one-third of it is a serious matter. Luckily, there is a way around it.

Research conducted by the Australia Institute in 2005, and repeated in 2010, found that nearly 80% of survey respondents would be happy for a donation to be made to a charity on their behalf in lieu of receiving a Christmas gift.

Let's do that, shall we?

It truly is more blessed to give than to receive, and no one has ever become poor by giving.

When Scrooge in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* repents his miserly ways, he doesn't just buy presents for the Cratchits, he makes a large subscription to "make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time" on the reasonable grounds that "many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts" – something that unfortunately hasn't changed in the intervening century and a half.

To browse Christmas appeals on GiveNow, Our Community's online giving platform, go to <https://www.givenow.com.au/search?term=christmas>. ■



New finance watchdog to make it easier to tackle rip-off merchants

BY MATTHEW SCHULZ, JOURNALIST, OUR COMMUNITY



Australian Financial Complaints Authority chief David Locke has a long history of involvement with charities and not-for-profits.

The head of the new Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA), which started business on November 1, has promised easier access for those needing help with finance disputes.

As well as tackling complaints from disgruntled individuals, the free and independent service will be accessible to charities and small not-for-profits (those with fewer than 100 staff).

The new super-authority will tackle complaints across the finance sector, covering banks, credit, superannuation, advice and insurance.

AFCA takes over the work of three bodies: the Credit and Investments Ombudsman, the Financial Ombudsman Service Australia, and the Superannuation Complaints Tribunal.

AFCA head David Locke – a former assistant

commissioner with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) – said AFCA would have a greater focus on helping people most in need.

He said many of the 55,000 cases AFCA is expected to tackle each year would arise from “people in hardship and people in difficulties”.

And he said the not-for-profit and charity sector played an important advocacy role for vulnerable members of the community, who were often targets of unscrupulous operators.

“Often the not-for-profit is really the bridge ►



between the person experiencing those issues and getting a fair resolution.”

Mr Locke said one of the top priorities of the organisation would be to improve access to vulnerable consumers.

“We’re going to be taking significant measures to make the service much more accessible for people right across communities,” Mr Locke said.

“I want to make sure that whoever you are, that you can use the service. And we recognise that most of us are not experts in financial services products and businesses. And we recognise it’s not an equal playing field necessarily, if you’re in a dispute with your bank. So our approach is very much to assist people and to provide extra support where people need it.”

He said the focus of AFCA would be to aim for negotiated solutions, using conciliation and mediation where possible, but with the power to make binding decisions.

AFCA – a not-for-profit in its own right – will be funded by compulsory fees paid by Australia’s financial firms.

More information

Visit <https://www.afca.org.au>



This is a condensed version of an article first published by the Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA), an Our Community enterprise. You can read the extended version [here](#). ■

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"How-to" guides and themed bundles

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and only at ourcommunity.com.au/booksale

Technology: through the looking glass

BY JULIENNE PRICE, HEAD, SCHOOLS AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR BANKING, COMMONWEALTH BANK



Watch now: NDIS participants and carers discuss the prototype app, based on blockchain technology, that's designed to help them manage costs and payments.

As we start looking forward to celebrating another new year, I'm excited by what technology has in store for us in 2019.

Sometimes it seems as though science fiction is becoming science fact. In the past 12 months, for example, we've seen the trial and introduction of **cashless collection plates** at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, and *The Big Issue* has introduced tap-and-go technology to enable its **magazine sellers** to go cashless.

The expansion of blockchain technology continues through work being done by CommBank and the CSIRO data innovation group known as Data 61. Their new report **Making Money Smart** details a pilot project involving National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants, carers, services providers and others working together to explore how technology could deliver real improvements in the lives of those using the scheme.

The project used blockchain technology to attach smart contracts to blockchain tokens, enabling the "smart money" to know who could spend it, as well as how and where it could be spent – all via a mobile app. It's early days, but the technology has huge potential to improve countless lives.

With all these technological improvements, we need to be open to new possibilities, to explore and share our own creativity, to collaborate and combine our problem-solving abilities. After all, tomorrow's big breakthrough is today's new idea.

You can learn more about CommBank's collaboration with the CSIRO's Data61 on the blockchain Smart Money trial [here](#).

I wish you and your loved ones a very merry Christmas and a safe new year.

Commonwealth Bank is an Our Community partner. ■



Community innovations: showcase your innovation to the nation at CIC 2019

The organisers of Australia's premier community sector conference are seeking volunteers to showcase their triumphs during the May 2019 Communities in Control conference.

Time will be set aside during the May 20–21 Melbourne conference for a handful of people to talk about what they've done to build a stronger community, and what others can learn from their experience.

A free ticket to the two-day conference and support for travel costs will be provided to the people chosen to take part in the Community Innovations Showcase.

For program details, go to www.communitiesincontrol.com.au.

What are we looking for?

- We want to hear about work being done in the community sector that's unique or particularly interesting

- We're interested in showcasing organisations, projects and initiatives that appear to be effective in achieving their aims (and we'll want you to have some evidence)
- We don't want this to be a "show and tell" so much as a learning event – you will need to be able to tease out and clearly convey the key transferable lessons from your experience
- We want to hear from people, not PowerPoints
- We want to showcase as many examples as possible, so you'll need to do all of that in no more than 15 minutes (with some time for questions at the end of the session).
- Would you like to be involved? Pitch us your story by filling in [this short form](#) before 5pm on Thursday, December 20, 2018 AEDT (sorry – no late submissions).

We'll reply by the end of January to everyone who enters a submission. ■

Compassionate super access for family violence victims

"On average, at least one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner. Given the prevalence of family violence in Australia, it's entirely appropriate early access to super has been extended to victims and survivors." Debby Blakey

The HESTA CEO has welcomed the federal government's announcement that victims and survivors of family violence will be able to receive early access to their superannuation. "HESTA has strongly advocated to extend compassionate access to super for victims and survivors of family violence and we welcome this step as it will provide a vital financial lifeline to those seeking safety from violence and abuse," Ms Blakey said. [Guardian report](#) | [HESTA media release](#)

Our Community, Trawalla Foundation offer \$500,000 for better-run not-for-profits



Up to 500 people from across Australia have the opportunity to win a part-scholarship to study for the Diploma of Business (Governance) thanks to the Trawalla Foundation and Our Community's Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA).

The Future 500 Leaders governance scholarship was created to increase opportunities for the most under-represented groups in the community.

Our Community Group Managing Director Denis Moriarty said, "We have always been champions of diversity, but we've decided to dial up our efforts in 2019. We're encouraging applicants from the demographics which have consistently been ignored or shunned.

"That's why we've called these scholarships the Future 500 Leaders program."

Applicants who represent or champion the

following sectors are encouraged to apply:

- Youth
- Women
- The LGBTQI+ community
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Rural and regional areas

Mr Moriarty said the need for good leaders was especially important given recent scandals and poor governance across Australia.

"Think RSL, the Catholic Church, charity rip-offs, advocacy issues, school collapses, community radio in-fighting, sporting club scandals and failures, and political battles.

"It's time to shake up the archaic governance structures that are hampering genuine ►



community progress. What better way to do it than to provide opportunities for new blood?”

The Trawalla Foundation’s Carol Schwartz said it was proven that education is the best investment in improving governance outcomes. “**Research shows** a 6:1 return (on value) for every dollar spent on governance training.”

“The Trawalla Foundation’s vision for the future of Australia is focused on strengthening gender equality, creativity, sustainability and social justice within our society. These scholarships are an excellent means to further our work.”

The scholarship will provide a \$1000 discount on the full cost of the diploma, Australia’s only diploma-level qualification specialising in not-for-profit governance. The diploma is delivered by Our Community’s Institute of Community Directors Australia in alliance with Federation Training.

Applications close on Wednesday December 19. Winners will be announced in early February 2019.

More information

Details: www.communitydirectors.com.au/scholarships

About Trawalla Foundation: www.trawallafoundation.com.au ■



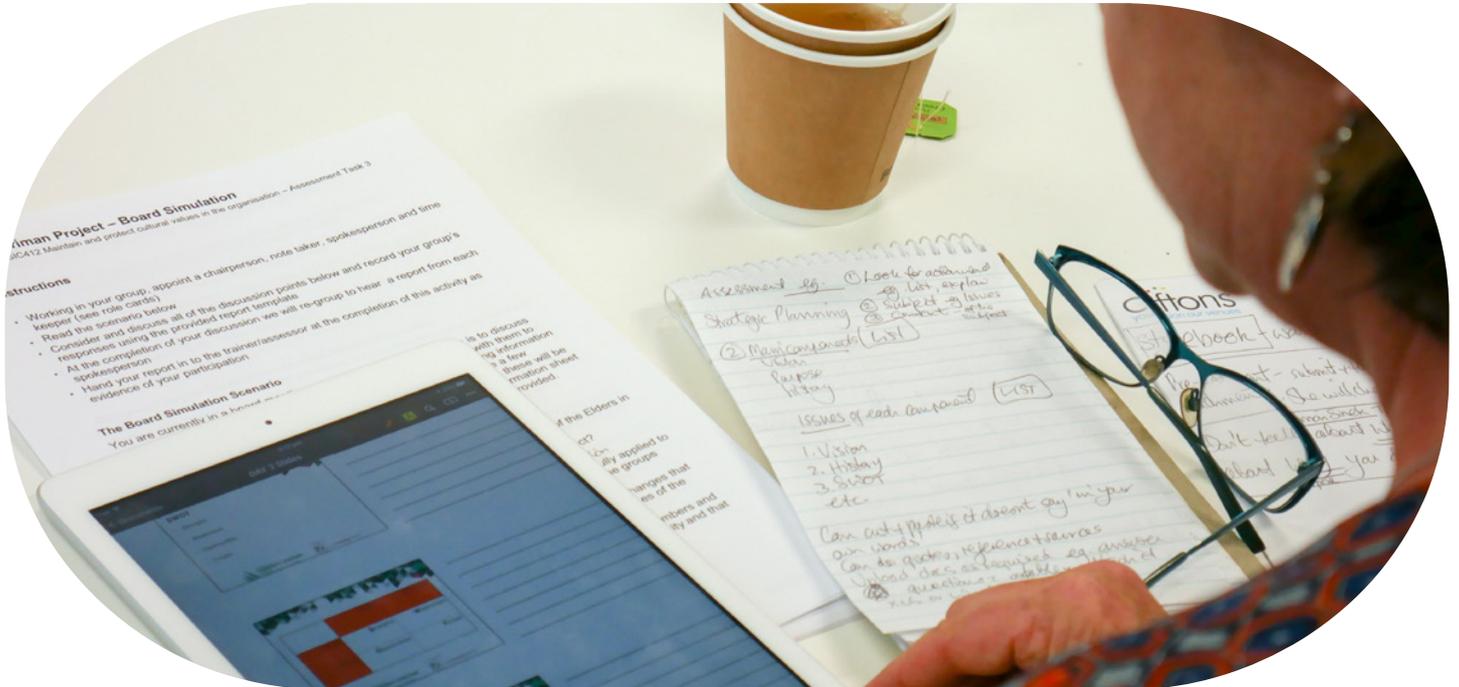
Call for generational targets on Indigenous kids in care



“We must adopt a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Strategy that includes generational targets to eliminate over-representation and address the causes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child removal.” Natalie Lewis, chair, Family Matters

The Family Matters Report 2018, published last month, found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are now 10.1 times more likely to be removed from their families than non-Indigenous children, fewer than half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care are placed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, and 25% of clients accessing homelessness services are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. **[Read the report](#)**

Upskill



Give yourself the gift of learning in 2019: each student in the Diploma of Business (Governance) receives an iPad preloaded with course materials. Photo: Richard Edge

Study for a governance diploma in 2019

We've just released 2019 start dates for Australia's only diploma-level course in governance aimed specifically at not-for-profit board directors, CEOs and senior staff.

The Diploma of Business (Governance) is delivered by Our Community's Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA) in alliance with Federation Training.

Whether you're in Exmouth or Townsville, Melbourne or Sydney, there's a course starting near you in 2019:

- Adelaide** April 1
- Alice Springs** April 15
- Brisbane** February 4, March 25,
May 13, July 22, September 16,
November 4

- Canberra** March 4, August 5
- Darwin** May 6
- Exmouth** March 11
- Melbourne** January 21, February 25,
April 1, May 27, July 1, July 29,
September 2, October 28
- Perth** February 25, April 8, May 20,
July 29, September 9, November 11
- Sydney** January 21, March 11, May 20,
July 15, September 9, October 28
- Townsville** March 25

Eligibility

Prospective and current members of boards are eligible for enrolment, although some deep knowledge of a not-for-profit organisation is highly desirable. ►



To be accepted for enrolment into this course, you must also:

- Have time to read, prepare and reflect on fundamental governance principles
- Have the ability to attend and actively participate in a total of five days of training (three consecutive days, plus two consecutive days approximately one month later)
- Commit to completing all competency based assessment within twelve months of face-to-face training (you must complete one unit assessment per month)
- Commit to transferring the knowledge gained to the organisation once the course is completed

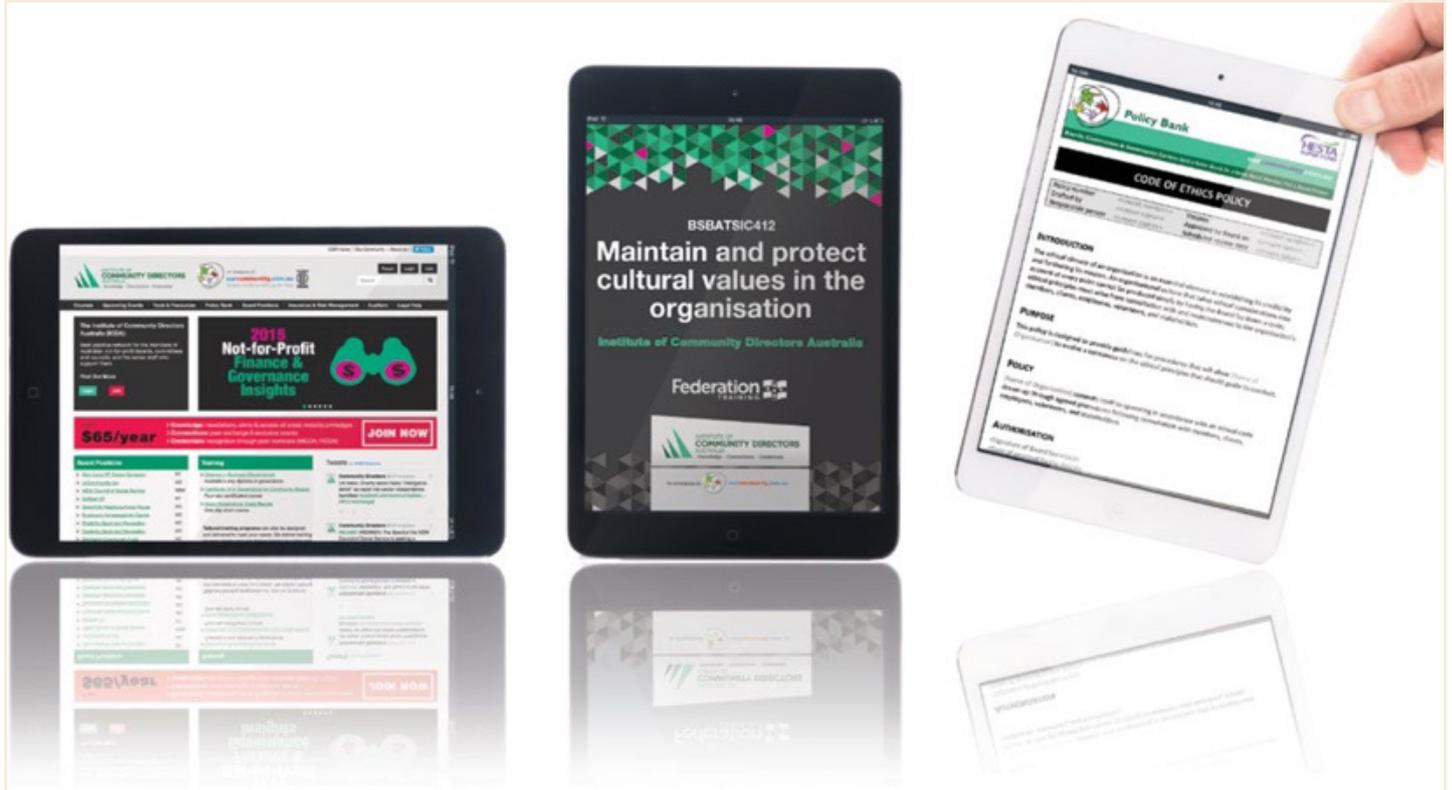
If you'd like to discuss your eligibility, email service@ourcommunity.com.au or call (03) 9320 6800.

Scholarships

Up to 500 people from across Australia have the opportunity to win a part-scholarship to study for the diploma thanks to the Trawalla Foundation and ICDA. See [page 31](#).

More information

For all the details, including costs, FAQs and syllabus, go to <http://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/courses>. ■





Good Jobs

At GoodJobs.com.au, our mission is to connect purpose-driven people with organisations in the not-for-profit and community sectors. We want to help energetic, idealistic, and passionate people overcome obstacles and achieve their career ambitions and dreams.

Selected current vacancies

Office manager

Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, Sydney

Use your skills to help us champion community radio stations by managing the day-to-day running of our Sydney office.

The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) champions community radio by building stations' capability and by creating a healthy environment for the sector to thrive.

We need someone who is a true team player with exceptional communication and high-level interpersonal skills. You will represent CBAA in a professional manner by providing quality customer service to all callers and visitors to the CBAA. You generally thrive in a fast paced and ever-changing environment.

Our ideal candidate needs to be able to demonstrate extensive confidence in verbal communication and writing skills, as well as be a people's person.

This is a five-days-a-week position. Part-time or flexible hours are negotiable upon request.

For more information [click here](#).

Business development officer (part time)

Western Vocational Association Inc, Taylors Lakes, Vic

Western Vocational Association (WVA), is a not-for-profit working in the disability area. We need a business development officer to be involved in an exciting growth period as we head in new directions.

The person we are looking for would be experienced in dealing with grant applications and responsible for increasing revenue from government and philanthropic grants.

This position offers flexible hours and working-from-home arrangements. It requires approximately eight hours per week, with potential to increase in the new year.

Experience in MYOB would be an advantage.

For more information [click here](#). ■



Board Matching Service

Here's a selection of the board vacancies currently advertised online at Good Jobs and the Institute of Community Directors Australia Board Matching Service.

To advertise your board vacancy (it's free!), go to www.goodjobs.com.au/job/board/advertise.form.

New South Wales

Screen Culture Association Inc (Antenna Documentary Film Festival)

The Antenna Documentary Film Festival is an initiative of Screen Culture Association (SCA), established in 2009. Its mission is to enhance public understanding and appreciation of the documentary art form and its significance, while making documentary films more accessible to a wider audience.

Held every October in cinemas across Sydney, the Antenna Documentary Film Festival is the first and only festival in Australia dedicated to non-fiction cinema.

The management committee meets from February to November every 4–6 weeks. The committee seeks members with expertise in business strategy and planning, sponsorship and fundraising, marketing, law, financial management, human resources management, membership development, and government and compliance.

Victoria

Director of Marketing and Communications, Fitzroy Football Club

The director of marketing and communications is the club's brand manager. They manage, appoint and coordinate communication-related suppliers to the club, coordinate weekly communications with members via the club's channels, and act as the primary point of contact for all media requirements.

Established in 1883, the Fitzroy Football Club (FFC) became a foundation team in the Victorian Football League in 1897. The first to win a VFL grand final, Fitzroy is the only club to have played in the VFA, VFL, AFL, VAFA and VWFL. The club holds a unique place in the hearts of Fitzroy and opposition supporters, the local community, and the VAFA competition it now plays in.

Today a strong, vibrant community club based at the historic Brunswick Street Oval, the Roys field men's and women's teams in the VAFA.

Australian Capital Territory

Multiple board roles, Canberra Glassworks

Canberra Glassworks (the Glassworks) was established in 2007 and is Australia's leading, world-class, glass centre for contemporary glass art, craft and design.

The Glassworks provides artists with state-of-the-art equipment; intensive workshops taught by leading glass artists; studios and residencies programs; and a unique context to explore, develop and realise new work.

We are seeking a director with a background in arts management, or as a practising artist or curatorial professional, without current or past ties with the Glassworks, to further enhance the diversity of our Board.

We are also seeking a director with a strong marketing background. ■

Our Community
holiday closure

Last day
Friday December 21

Reopening
Wednesday January 2

Happy
Holidays!



ourcommunity.com.au
Where not-for-profits go for help

*Our Community Matters is your free community sector update, brought to you by **Our Community** – Australia’s centre for excellence for the nation’s 600,000 not-for-profits and schools, providing advice, tools, resources and training. It’s published on the first Wednesday of alternate months.*

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