

Our Community **MATTERS**

Your community knowledge bank helping groups survive, improve, grow and innovate



Resources, News, Innovations and Tips on:

- ✓ Funding, Finance & Membership Management
- ✓ Leadership & Advocacy
- ✓ Management & Training
- ✓ Marketing & Media
- ✓ Boards, Committees & Governance
- ✓ Community & Business Partnerships
- ✓ Insurance & Risk Management

www.ourcommunity.com.au

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Welcome to the latest edition of *Our Community Matters*, our regular free community update. It is yet another benefit of membership of www.ourcommunity.com.au – the premier destination for Australia's 700,000 community, education and non-profit groups. Our Community provides community groups with the latest funding and fundraising news as well as practical management, board, marketing and community business partnership information. Our Community also operates the [Australian Giving Centre](#), the free online donation service that has so far raised almost \$5 million for Australian community appeals. A summary of our services is listed at the end of this newsletter. If you have trouble reading this newsletter or have any comments please let us know by emailing kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au

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1. Welcome by Rhonda Galbally AO, CEO of www.ourcommunity.com.au

Welcome to the latest edition of Our Community Matters newsletter.

Things are moving along apace at Our Community as we gather steam for the 2006 Communities in Control conference.

This year will see the return of the standout hit of the 2005 conference – Community Idol.

Last year's finalists – prisoners' advocacy group Sisters Inside, the Horn of Africa Communities Network and the community environmental group CERES – wowed the 1500-strong Communities in Control audience with their inspiring stories of hardworking groups making a real difference to their communities.

Sisters Inside, one of more than 150 entries, was voted the eventual winner – taking home the 2005 Community Idol title as well as \$3000 cash.

Competition details for the 2006 prize – sponsored by Westpac – are being released today (see **Part 2**) and I want to urge every group in Australia to start preparing your entry so you don't miss out on your chance at the crown.

We'll want to know who you are, what you do, how you demonstrate excellence in participation, governance, fundraising, leadership and advocacy – in short, why you stand out from the pack.

The winner will again be decided by delegates to the Communities in Control conference, which will be held at Moonee Valley Racing Club in Melbourne on June 19 and 20.

More information about the Community Idol competition, the conference, and the Pre-Conference Special Day on Sunday, June 18, is in the **next section** of the newsletter or you can go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic.

Still on the topic of conferences, we're really delighted with the feedback we have received from our very first Best Practice in Grantmaking conference – an event designed to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of grantmakers across Australia.

Part of the success of that event was the input from all those community groups who filled in our pre-conference survey on their experiences in applying for grants. A big thank you to all of those people who took part in the survey. As promised, you can read the results in **Part 5** of the newsletter.

RHONDA GALBALLY AO
Chief Executive Officer
www.ourcommunity.com.au

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2. Win \$3000 cash for your group by becoming the 2006 Westpac Community Idol

What makes your group great? Why do you stand out from the crowd?

Now is the time to turn the answers to those questions into cash by entering the **2006 Westpac Community Idol** competition.

Three finalists, chosen by a panel of eminent community leaders, will strut their stuff in front of the expected capacity crowd at the 2006 Communities in Control conference on June 19. A further 10 groups will be presented with special "Community Idol Special Commendation" awards.

The eventual winner of the title, and the \$3000 prize money, will be decided by a popular vote of conference delegates. All three finalists will win a set of Our Community books and a year's subscription to our series of newsletters – valued at more than \$800.

One representative from each of the finalist groups will be flown (if interstate) to Melbourne for the conference.

The competition provides a chance for Australian community groups to identify what they excel at and to publicly celebrate those successes.

It is not about being the biggest or the most visible or the best-resourced group – it's about how your group is leading the way in representing and serving your community.

To be eligible to enter the competition, groups need to be incorporated and have been in existence for more than two years.

You will also have to explain, via the official entry form at www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol how your group:

- Promotes accessibility and equal participation in your community
- Has built a dynamic Board or Committee of Management
- Has pursued excellence in fundraising
- Has developed genuine business and community partnerships
- Has shown leadership and advocacy
- Has a track record of community work that makes you stand out from the pack.

Entries will close on May 16, 2006 and short-listed entries will be advised by phone before the end of May.

To apply online or download a hardcopy application form, go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol.

[Find out how to find money for your community project: speakers announced](#)

Bookings are coming through thick and fast for the 2006 Communities in Control Conference, which this year features top-selling author Bryce Courtenay, ACTU President Sharan Burrow, AFL Chief Executive Andrew Demetriou, International Pratt Fellow and world expert in community development for health and wellbeing, Professor Meredith Minkler – and many, many more.

Following on from the success of last year's pre-conference special day on boards and committees, this year we will be holding another special day on Sunday, June 18 titled 'How to Find Money for your Community Project: The A-Z for Leaders, Boards and the Community'.



We are delighted to announce a stellar list of presenters for this special day, including:

- Keynote speeches by:
 - **Peter Kenyon** (founder and CEO of the Bank of I.D.E.A.S.)
Communities Surviving and Thriving: From Rags to Riches
 - **Dr Sue Wallace** (CEO of the Fundraising Institute of Australia)
The Challenge and Inspirations of Fundraising
- Workshop presenters including:
 - **Paul Terdich** (Joy Melbourne FM/Community Broadcasting Association Australia)
 - **Andrew Urquhart** (Walwa Bush Hospital)
 - **Denis Tracey** (Centre for Philanthropy and Social Investment, Swinburne University)
 - **Patrick Moriarty** (Our Community)
 - **Karen Martin** (Macedon Ranges Shire Council)
 - **Kara Wise & Chantelle Davies** (Australia Post)
 - **Rick Henke** (Karoonda Football Club)
 - **Jenny Ellis** (Uniting Church Pancake Day)
 - **Maggie Maguire** (Abbotsford Convent Foundation)
- The Panel: *Baby Boomers and Money – the Reality of Lifetime Donations through Bequests for Community Groups*, featuring:
 - **Ian Mannix** (ABC Radio)
 - **Laurence Joseph** (Gandel Charitable Trust)
 - **Wendy Brooks** (The Royal Women's Hospital Foundation)

Book your place or find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic.

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3. What's counted counts: Volunteering to be included in 2006 Census

Every five years the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) goes out into the highways and byways to knock on every inhabited door and register the whereabouts of every human being in the country at midnight on Census night (August 8). It's one of the biggest enterprises in the country and a shining example to all of us of how to organise a doorknock.

The census form is about the size of a bed sheet already, and adding any more questions is quite a business. However, many people in the government, the bureaucracy and the general public are keenly interested in the development of social capital – the spread of trust, the development of a strong voluntary not-for-profit sector, the bringing together of citizens towards social goals, and the promotion of social cohesion.

For that reason, the ABS will in its 2006 round collect data from households on any volunteer work they do with community groups, charities, sports clubs, schools, cultural groups and aid organisations.

Our present statistics on how much voluntary work Australians do is based on a much smaller survey in 2002.

At that time the ABS estimated that nearly one-third (4.4 million) of us aged 18 years and over did voluntary work in that year, contributing 704.1 million hours of unpaid work, and more than three-quarters (10.3 million) of us donated to our favourite causes.

Volunteer rates varied across states and territories, being highest in South Australia (38%) and lowest in New South Wales (29%). Country people volunteered about 10% more than city folk, and women were slightly more likely to volunteer than men.

The highest rate of volunteering (40%) came in people aged 35-44 years.

Sport and recreation organisations attracted the largest numbers of men and community/welfare the largest numbers of women. Women were twice as likely as men to serve the food, whereas men were nearly three times as likely to do repairs and gardening.

Not only will the new Census data be much more accurate, we will be able to break it out by other census categories like region, age, sex, income, national origin, and religion, giving us useful pointers on which areas are strong on social cohesion and where the weak spots are.

Fill it out cheerily – it'll give us all some valuable information in our lobbying work for the voluntary sector.

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4. Understanding business planning – brought to you by Westpac

Business planning is not just for businesses. In fact, as Domini Stuart writes in the latest Westpac article on community group finances, a business plan can be the blueprint for success for any not-for-profit organisation – allowing you to effectively anticipate potential problems and think of ways to counter them before they occur.

Your organisation may be operating on a not-for-profit basis, but in many ways it's still operating like any small- to medium-sized business. According to David Dandie, Head of Business Advisory and Training at Westpac, understanding this is the first step to running your organisation more effectively.

"People from not-for-profit organisations often don't think business planning is relevant to their situation," he says. "In fact, both types of businesses want to make as much money as possible. The only difference is what you want to do with it."

Dandie outlines seven key steps to success for any not-for-profit organisation:

Step 1: Planning

Fundamental to the health of an organisation, planning underpins all of the other steps. A business plan isn't something you do only when you want to borrow money, it's a blueprint for your success that needs to be regularly updated and referred to.

"You want to achieve a certain objective each year and this requires a certain amount of money. How do you know how much money you need? Where is this going to come from? How are you going to raise this much?" says Dandie. "Planning means anticipating the outcome and setting the steps in place to achieve that outcome."

Writing a plan will:

- give shape to your ideas
- help you organise your priorities
- help establish goals
- demonstrate to partners that you that you know what you're doing
- help establish responsibilities
- help you formulate appropriate questions and guide you towards the answers
- highlight gaps in your knowledge or understanding.

Step 2: Understanding financial statements

Your financial statements are like a snapshot of how your not-for-profit organisation has behaved in the past. "Your financials show how much money you have received, where the money came from, and, more importantly, where it all went," says Dandie.

"From this, you can improve the way you manage your resources and levels of efficiency – whether that be in sales, marketing, preparing applications to raise funds, providing the service to the community or by concentrating in areas that tie up your available cash flow. All of the answers start with your financials – if you know where to look."

Step 3: Understanding the relationship between price, volume and cost

If you're selling goods to raise funds, it's vital to understand how a change to one of these elements will affect the others. For instance, if you lower the price, how much will the volume of sales need to change for you to make the same amount of money? If costs go up, how many extra sales will you need to generate to cover this additional cost?

"If your rent went up by \$20,000 a year, you may think you only require an extra \$20,000 in sales to cover the additional cost," says Dandie. "In fact, if you were selling fundraising pens or badges for \$1 each, but each one cost 60 cents to produce, you would only have 40 cents from every item you sold to spend on something else. To cover that extra \$20,000, you'd need to sell \$50,000 worth of pens or badges."

Funding is often limited and it is important to understand how making decisions around how to spend these funds will really impact your final outcome.

Step 4: Understanding cash flow

Cash flow is rarely a constant stream into any business, hence it is important to understand your seasons so you can plan properly.

Completing a cash flow budget will enable you to identify cash flow peaks and troughs and be prepared for them. How much cash will you need? Should you arrange an overdraft? Increase your fundraising activities at different times? Or put up the price of something you sell? This will allow you to be clear about the most effective strategies for your operation before the problem arises.

Step 5: Growing your not-for-profit organisation

Many not-for-profit organisations want to grow and be able to expand their community service – but there's such a thing as too much too soon. "If you haven't planned properly for growth, you may not be in a position to support growth," says Dandie. "For instance, understanding what staffing needs will be required, systems, processes, property, leasing, cash requirements, marketing materials should all be considered. Growth brings many benefits but consider the potential cost of growth to your business and how best to plan for these."

Step 6: Borrowing properly

"Take the time to research the possibilities, and tell your bank exactly what you're borrowing the money for so you can be sure you've found the best option," says Dandie. "Match the life of the loan with the life of the asset, don't use short-term facilities such as an overdraft and business cards to pay for long-term assets. These facilities are designed to cover short-term expenses, everyday operating costs." Banks provide different products to meet different needs so understand what your needs are and match this with the most appropriate solution.

Step 7: Transition and succession

This may not be such an obvious issue for a not-for-profit organisation as for, say, a family-owned enterprise, but it is an important matter even if it is expressed in different ways. For a not-for-profit organisation, problems could arise when staff or volunteers move on. "Transition is inevitable – what you need is continuity through change," says Dandie.

"It may be as simple as creating a hard copy of what each person does within the organisation to make a procedures manual. This will enable a newcomer to pick up where an outgoing person left off. You also need to develop a strategy so that everyone knows the objectives of the organisation and what they are all working towards."

Adds Dandie: "The fact is, no one goes into business or sets up a not-for-profit organisation because they like finance – but you still have to deal with it every day. The better you deal with it, the greater your chance of success."

Westpac's *Beyond Survival Workshops* are designed to help you understand key financial concepts and provide practical solutions to plan and manage your organisation more efficiently. For more information, you can call Westpac's Business Advisory & Training Team on 1800 012 501 or email: businessseminars@westpac.com.au

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5. Community news & resources: what's new

More policies online

Another half a dozen brand new policies have been added to the free Policy Bank at www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank.

The policies in this ever-expanding resource are posted in Microsoft Word format and can be downloaded to your own computer, adapted to your own circumstances and adopted by your group.

There are now close to 50 policies online, including the newly posted -

- [Access & Equity Policy](#)
- [Credit Card Policy](#)
- [Volunteer Policy](#)
- [Board Attendance Policy](#)
- [Board Confidentiality Policy](#)
- [Acceptable Use of Computers, Internet & Email Policy](#).

Our thanks go to those groups who have embraced the spirit of the Policy Bank and contributed their own policies for inclusion. Keep them coming in: You can send to kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au, post to PO Box 354 North Melbourne 3051 or fax to (03) 9326 6859.

Overcoming 'Grants Rage'

Our thanks also to everyone who filled in our 'Grants in Australia' survey, which unearthed some of the major grumbles community organisations have with the processes and procedures put in place by grantmaking organisations.

The survey turned up some forthright comments and some interesting trends:

- State/Territory Governments were the most common source of grants for community organisations, with 49% of respondent identifying this as their primary source of grants funds, compared with 16% for the Federal Government, and an even spread of 12% each for local government, philanthropy and private or corporate sources.
- 66% of respondents felt that grants were getting harder to secure, compared with 29% who said there was no change and 6% who said it was getting easier to secure grants.
- Giving feedback on applications emerged as the area in which grantmakers were performing worst with 80% of respondents saying grantmakers were "poor" in this area.
- Other areas in need of improvement included provision of after-hours grants inquiry and free 1800 telephone lines; advertising of grants programs; accessibility of grants programs (e.g. for non-DGR applicants); amount of detail required in application forms; closing dates (time allowed for applications to be written and submitted); and basic customer service (answering/returning calls/emails etc).
- Grantmakers seemed to be doing better at things like providing information about average grant amounts and previously funded projects.

Respondents were also asked to identify their one biggest grantmaking bugbear, with the most common themes including:

- The focus on “innovative” or short-term projects, rather than funds for ongoing costs or capital.
- Poor communication – not providing enough (or clear enough) information, and not providing feedback.
- Unrealistic timeframes, including guidelines being released too close to closing dates, delayed decisions and delays in providing funds.
- “Pigeon-holing” or not taking into account the special circumstances of individual groups, particularly those in rural areas.
- Big organisations and those with charitable or DGR status being given an unfair advantage over small groups.
- Problems with guidelines and application forms.
- Unrealistic reporting or acquittal requirements.

Results of the survey were revealed to delegates at Our Community's inaugural Best Practice in Grantmaking Conference, an event designed to help boost the efficiency and effectiveness of Australia's grantmakers, which was held in Melbourne on February 17.

A full analysis of the grants survey will be presented in the March edition of **The Australian Best Practice Grantmaking Quarterly**.

“Giving Centres” make local giving easier

New locally based websites designed to make it easier for residents and businesses to support local community groups have been launched in several local government areas lately.

The latest council to put in place a unique Giving Centre is Greater Dandenong, in Melbourne's south-east.

The website – www.ourcommunity.com.au/dandenonggives – provides a way residents can make a difference locally by giving money to local groups through a free, secure online donations service powered by www.ourcommunity.com.au with the support of Westpac.

Residents can also find out how they can give their time through volunteering, give in an emergency, and give clothes, furniture, blood and computers. The site also provides links to tips on giving wisely and a giving survey designed to gather information that will help local groups understand better how people prefer to give.

Dandenong Gives joins another recently launched Giving Centre participant – Banyule Council in the north-east of Melbourne.

Like Dandenong Gives, Banyule Gives – at www.ourcommunity.com.au/banyulegives – is designed to give smaller grassroots groups the ability to accept online donations at no cost, and help build an even better, more connected community.

A similar service has been set up for Gold Coast residents at www.ourcommunity.com.au/goldcoastgives.

For more information about the local Giving Centres, please contact Kate Caldecott by email to katec@ourcommunity.com.au or telephone (03) 9320 6804.

Putting an end to bored meetings

Most people involved in community groups know the frustrations that can result from poorly structured or badly run meetings.

As board development consultant Catherine Brown points out in the latest edition of Our Community's *Board Builder* newsletter, the frustrations can be caused by a range of factors:

- You didn't spend enough time on the important decisions
- You didn't really get to the bottom of a concern you had about a report or draft budget
- You didn't discuss the future, just current crises – yet again
- You didn't review progress on strategic issues
- You simply ran out of time
- You couldn't get a word in edgeways!

Catherine says that frustrating meetings is a sign that the agenda might need some work.

“Just because an organisation has used one agenda for 20 years does not mean it is writ in stone,” Catherine says. “If an established agenda format is not working, don’t be scared to change it. As long as board members are meeting their duties and the minutes are well maintained, the actual order of items on an agenda is open to review.”

The full article is in the latest edition of the Board Builder – the newsletter exclusively for the not-for-profit sector. You can find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/boardbuilder.

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6. Wellbeing survey confirms happiness can't be bought

The old saying that money can't buy happiness has been borne out by the latest chapter of the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index.

The latest instalment of the Index examined the personal wellbeing of Australians across a number of categories – and according to which of the country's 150 federal electorates they lived in – and resulted in some surprising findings.

Eight of the nine happiest electorates covered less affluent, mainly rural and/or isolated areas of the country.

The happiest electorate was Wide Bay, which takes in parts of Queensland's Hervey Bay and Fraser Island. The rest of the top nine was made up by Richmond (NSW), Eden-Monaro (NSW), Ryan (Qld), Higgins (Vic), Bendigo (Vic), Murray (Vic), Riverina (NSW) and Mayo (SA).

Of the top nine, only Higgins, in Melbourne's inner-east, could be classed as affluent and distinctly metropolitan.

To further emphasise the trend, many of the electorates that were the most unhappy were in metropolitan areas that were comfortable compared to the less affluent rural electorates which headed the survey.

The unhappiest electorate was Grayndler – covering parts of Sydney's inner-west including Annandale, Leichhardt, Petersham, Newtown, Marrickville and Summer Hill – despite it having lower poverty and higher average incomes than the happiest electorate in NSW, Richmond.

The rest of the bottom nine included: Rankin (Qld), Reid (NSW), Werriwa (NSW), Hasluck (WA), Gorton (Vic), Perth (WA), Parramatta (NSW) and Sydney (NSW).

Survey researchers found that most of the top-scoring electorates had low population density, more women, more people older than 55, less income inequality and more married people. The fact the cost of living in rural areas was lower than metropolitan areas – meaning they have more disposable income – was also a factor.

Overall, Victoria was the happiest state, just ahead of Tasmania and South Australia. Western Australia is the unhappiest, with New South Wales not far behind.

A report on the study, including results and explanations, can be found via the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index site - www.australianunity.com.au/au/info/wellbeingindex/default.asp

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7. Our Community Leaders – Great Australian Leaders in Focus: Jane Schwager

The subject of this month's **Great Australian Leaders in Focus** feature is Jane Schwager, a woman who has been at the cutting edge of social leadership in Australia for more than 20 years.

Jane is the Chief Executive of **Nonprofit Australia**, an independent organisation established to assist the non-profit sector in Australia to be more cost effective and innovative. Previously, she was the Chief Executive of The Benevolent Society, a major social enterprise providing innovative programs in high-need communities, and before that, Jane held senior positions in the NSW Government, where she was responsible for advising the Government on its social agenda across departments.

Jane serves on a number of boards, including Nonprofit Australia, Social Ventures Australia, Indigenous Festivals of Australia, The Taxation Board of Australia and the Sydney Medical Research Foundation.

Our Community: Who do you consider to be the three great leaders of our time?

Jane Schwager: I think that Mikhail Gorbachev, Chou En-lai and Nelson Mandela would be among the three great leaders of our time. For me leadership is about achieving a vision which is bold, significant and changes the shape of history for the better. A bold vision also needs to be achieved in a way which aims to be peaceful and respectful of humanity. It does not preclude bloodshed but the vision for change must seek to minimise human loss.

All three men led major transformations of their countries, changing the face of history for the better without major collapse and revolutionary bloodshed. This was achieved in very fragile environments where the excesses of the current administrations were becoming destructive and tyrannical. All three men appeared to operate with a strong moral compass and with a level of humility which avoided the excesses of arrogance and hubris. All three put their vision well ahead of their own personal comfort and survival.

Our Community: What are the three attributes you would consider to be essential to a leader?

Jane Schwager:

1. A bold vision and the capacity and skills to execute it.
2. A strong moral or ethical framework, personal humility and an ability to put vision ahead of personal comfort and survival.
3. Passion and a determination to never give up until a vision is executed.

I believe that these three qualities are essential to transformation. Leadership is about transformation.

Our Community: What are the three greatest barriers to new leaders emerging in Australia?

Jane Schwager:

1. The tyranny of mediocrity – like delivers like.
2. A culture of restraint and control.
3. A moral compass of 'us and them'.

Our Community: What advice would you give to a potential leader to take them to the next stage?

Jane Schwager: Fear is the greatest barrier – fear of rejection, fear of slander, fear of our own potential power – it is hard to turn back once a path is taken. Fear is about losing something – I like the Buddhist teaching of letting go of our grasping, needy natures. There can be a great freedom in pursuing this discipline and realising the more we fear and hold onto the safe zone we are in the more we suffer.

Happiness and leadership power to me is about living lightly and seeking to do good and not being swayed from the simplicity of this way of being.

Our Community: Nature/nurture – are leaders born or bred?

Jane Schwager: I do think some modelling is necessary as we develop. I also believe that certain temperaments seem to be driven to search and to make a difference. The two must go together in my view – otherwise the latter can build destructive behaviours.

Our Community: What do you consider to be the three top leadership issues facing the nation?

Jane Schwager:

- It worries me that there is an emerging complacency in Australia – a cosiness – that means people are reluctant to move outside their comfort zone. I believe this a dangerous zone and one where human travesties can happen and we run the risk of turning a blind eye. This is not a culture that nurtures leaders as they tend to be viewed as irritants that disturb the comfort zone we are all in.
- I sense a culture which is less tolerant and more judgemental – this creates a climate of fear, of rejection, of us and them.
- Difference and boldness must be valued and nurtured – otherwise it tends to be repressed before it emerges.

Our Community: What insights have you gained personally on your leadership journey and how have they impacted on your style of leadership?

Jane Schwager: It is a lonely journey as leadership is inherently about taking the less travelled path. This is not about 'leading the charge'. It is about working with and through others and respecting and listening. The added value of leadership is a capacity to make sense of the trends and to skillfully steer a path which betters

the human condition. Loner versus consultative dichotomies are far too simplistic when talking about true leadership.

Being true to ourselves and our vision is fundamental – even if it is a lonely journey.

Living lightly, openly and being happy are essential human qualities that need to underpin the boldness, the skill and the vision of leadership. We're all pretty clumsy players.

Our Community: Who have been your own leadership mentors and how did they assist in developing your own leadership style?

Jane Schwager: No single person stands out. I tend to be a bower bird that collects something from everyone I meet – sometimes it's a way of viewing, sometimes it's a reminder to review our ethics, our moral compass, sometimes it's about the creative process, sometimes it's about the skill of diplomacy – so much to learn!

The most important lesson for me is that every interaction teaches us something and keeps us in touch with others.

My parents – with all their foibles – were my strongest mentors. To be loved and believed in provide such solid foundations. These give us a level of personal courage and a sense of place in the world.

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8. Get your campaigns ready – the end (of year) is nigh

The financial year is already eight months old and that means many community organisations will be starting to plan their end-of-financial-year fundraising campaigns.

For many groups, that means making sure they have made it through people's letterboxes by the time tax time hits and people start looking around for good causes to support.

If you are one of these groups and you're contemplating a direct mail campaign to mark the end of the financial year – or for any other reason, for that matter – make sure you find out if you're eligible for **[Charity Mail](#)**.

Charity Mail is an Australia Post initiative – part of its commitment to giving back to the community – that allows community organisations with Income Tax Exempt status to obtain lower prices for bulk mail lodgements.

The discount is available for mailings of bar-coded Pre-Sort small letters and a minimum of 300 small letters per lodgement applies. But there are no content-based restrictions. You can include advertising and promotional material, greeting cards, newsletters, statements and invoices and even material from other organisations (as long as they support charitable causes and the material included is incidental to the main purpose of mailing).

You can find out more about Charity Mail pricing and how to get the savings by going to the Marketing, Media and Post Centre, developed by Our Community and Australia Post, at **www.ourcommunity.com.au/MarketingMediaPost** and clicking the Charity Mail button.

While you're there, don't forget that the second quarterly prize of \$5000 worth of marketing help is still up for grabs.

This fantastic prize includes your choice of either a \$5000 refund on the postage cost of your next direct mail campaign, or the services of a professional Australia Post marketing consultant for a day to help with your campaign.

To win, all you have to do is go to the Marketing, Media and Post Centre and then tell us what you thought of the site by completing a five-minute online survey.

The competition will close in mid-March and the winner of this quarter's prize will be notified soon after. As well as the major prize, three further groups will receive a free copy of the step-by-step grantseeking guide, *Winning Grants Funding in Australia*, valued at \$36.

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9. Tax Office looks at changes to DGR reporting

The Australian Tax Office (ATO) has announced that it is **seeking the views** of Australian organisations with tax-deductible (DGR) status on a possible streamlining of the process of filling out online tax forms.

It would save time, the ATO suggests, if these organisations were able to notify the tax office when someone made a donation: "Using that data to provide a partly completed return for people to use ... would make the experience of lodging tax returns for individuals easier."

The ATO stresses that it has made no decision to proceed with this practice but wants to seek preliminary views on the capacity of DGRs to collect such data now and into the future, compliance costs, transitional costs, the likely impact of costs on DGR operations, and the problems likely to be faced by DGRs collecting and storing sensitive data such as donor tax file numbers.

While the ATO proposal has some obvious advantages, it also has a number of possible risks, any of which would justify extended consideration before the proposal is taken any further.

1. The proposal would involve DGR not-for-profits asking their donors for their individual tax file numbers.

- This could easily be construed as intrusive, and might provoke resistance among donors that would affect giving levels.
- The possession of tax file numbers would place a large amount of highly confidential information in the hands of DGR entities, which would require increased security measures.
- While the ATO puts this forward as a timesaving convenience measure, some thought should also be given to its possible use should the government ever take an interest in controlling the sector more strictly.

2. The proposal would give the ATO a much more detailed and more specific look at the donation practices of taxpayers.

- At present, donations to tax-deductible entities up to a certain sum do not need to be itemised. What would be the response of the ATO to people who claim up to that limit without any corresponding entries from DGR not-for-profits?
- At present, people often rather fuzzily claim unitemised deductions for all the money they've given to good causes throughout the year, including gifts to non-DGR bodies and non-gifts (such as raffle tickets or memberships) to DGRs; this procedure would tighten that up considerably, bringing into even sharper relief the gulf between DGR and non-DGR organisations, and thus has the potential to affect giving to both groups.

3. The proposal may make less work for individuals, but at the cost of making more work for not-for-profit organisations.

- Organisations would need to supply exact details to the tax office, presumably under legal penalties for breach (or error); accounting systems would need to be upgraded and strengthened (not necessarily a bad thing, but unquestionably an additional expense).

The ATO call for feedback was issued on February 10 and comments were requested before March 3; however, any organisation that has strong concerns over this issue would be well advised even now to express those concerns to the **Tax Office** and the **Treasurer**.

More information on the proposal is at <http://ato.gov.au/nonprofit/content.asp?doc=/content/69084.htm>

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10. Community Briefs

Tell us what you really think ...

We're giving away three sets of Our Community books – worth more than \$400 per set – as a way of saying thank you to groups who take the time to fill in a new survey at www.ourcommunity.com.au/rfsurvey.

The survey is designed to help us discover what sort of fundraising our members do and the sorts of fundraising questions they have so that we can make our newsletters, help sheets and other publications more relevant and responsive.

Information gleaned from the survey will inform ongoing enhancement of our ever-popular *Raising Funds* newsletter. Other recent additions to the newsletter have included:

- **The Calendar:** a handy listing of upcoming events to give groups a peg to hang their fundraisers on;
- **The Lucky Dip:** a listing of fun and funky fundraising products (and where to get them) – 20 per edition during 2006
- **The Toolbox:** step-by-step instructions to help groups tackle a common fundraising task

You can find out more about Raising Funds at www.ourcommunity.com.au/raisingfunds and the survey, which closes at the end of March, is at www.ourcommunity.com.au/rfsurvey.

Celebrating harmony

March 21 is Harmony Day around Australia – a chance for Australians to celebrate our successes as a diverse and harmonious multicultural society, recommit to our common values of respect and goodwill towards our fellow Australians of all backgrounds – and to say “no” to racism.

Community groups, schools and councils have traditionally been at the forefront of Harmony Day activities, which include radio shows exploring diversity issues, compilation of multicultural cookbooks, social gatherings, concerts, clothing exhibitions and a huge range of other activities.

You can get involved by joining an activity, or by organising one of your own. There are also a range of free Harmony Day products – ribbons, postcards, posters, stickers, plastic wrap – that you can order and use to celebrate and promote the event.

You can order the products, find out what's on or register a new event at www.harmony.gov.au or by calling 1800 331 100.

And if you want to make your own community group more harmonious, consider introducing an Access and Equity policy. You can find a template policy you can download and adapt at www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank.

Recruiting for diversity

On a similar topic, the American Red Cross has reportedly launched an aggressive campaign to recruit racial and ethnic minorities into its volunteer network following criticism in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

The organisation has been forced to respond to complaints that it was culturally insensitive in its response to the disaster, which forced thousands of people – many of them minorities – to seek food and shelter in Red Cross facilities that were set up predominantly in white neighbourhoods and staffed predominantly by white volunteers.

Following the disaster, the organisation said it was launching various initiatives designed to increase staff and volunteer diversity.

This serves as a potent reminder to our own community groups about the importance of diversity. Not only should we be recruiting from our own community – all of it, not just the easy parts – because it's the right thing to do, but also because it will help our organisations become more efficient, effective and responsive. In short, you can only serve a community properly if that community is represented in the group.

Free help sheets and more information about making your group more diverse are online at www.ourcommunity.com.au/boards-diversity.

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11. Community Jobs

A selection of community jobs from Our Community's latest *Good Moves* newsletter:



ACT

Job Title	Organisation	
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	ACROD	Details

NSW

Job Title	Organisation	
POLICY OFFICER	ACROD	Details
Community Social Educator	The Housing Connection (NSW) inc	Details
Neighbourhood Services Manager	Holdsworth Street Community Centre	Details
Operations Admin Coordinator	Holdsworth Street Community Centre	Details

QLD

Job Title	Organisation	
Telemarketing with a difference	Paradise Kids	Details

VIC

Job Title	Organisation	
Coordinator Recreation Program	Interchange Inner East	Details
Strengthening Families Worker (Full Time)	Kildonan Child and Family Services	Details
Community Training Officer	Women's Health In the North & Northern Migrant Resource Centre	Details
Community Youth Worker	SPAUMAY - South Port Ministries Among Youth	Details
Service Manager	Ashcare	Details
Communication-Publication Officer	Fitzroy Legal Service	Details
Manager	The Ross House Association	Details
Personal Carers	Australian Homecare Services	Details

WA

Job Title	Organisation	
Deputy CEO	Bridging the Gap Inc	Details

www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs



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12. Fast Forward

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send it onto your friends and fellow community groups in your area.

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 web page.

We would also like your input into this newsletter. If you have any thoughts, feedback or any issues you would like addressed we would appreciate hearing from you. You can send your comments to kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au or call (03) 9320 6815.

We now have button logos for those groups who want to set up links to www.ourcommunity.com.au from their own websites. Just visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/images and right click your mouse on the image you want and then click on SAVE to your own computer.

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13. About Our Community

Our Community (www.ourcommunity.com.au) is the national gateway for Australia's 700,000 community groups and schools. Through the Our Community Centres of Excellence, we provide the one-stop-gateway for practical resources, support and linkages between community networks and the general public, business and government – building capacity to strengthen the community in every Australian State and Territory.

Our Community's website currently consists of 15 major **Centres of Excellence**.

Make a Difference

- **Australian Giving Centre**: Helping Individuals and Workplaces Give in Every Way
- **Community & Business Partnerships**: Connect, Make a Difference and Form a Partnership
- **Boards, Committees & Governance Centre**: Build a Better Board; Be a Better Board Member; and Find a Board Position

Find & Manage Money

- **Community Funding Centre**: Helping all Community Groups and Schools Find Money
- **Community Financial Centre**: Banking Solutions and Services
- **Best Practice in Grantmaking**: Achieving Best Practice with Grants, Awards and Scholarship Programs

Build Capacity

- **Marketing, Media & Post Centre**: Delivering Better Results for Community Groups
- **Management and Training Centre**: The A-Z of Resources for Managing Community Groups
- **Leadership Centre**: Community Groups Can Do: Leadership
- **Communities in Control**: Giving Voice – and Support – to Grassroots Community Groups
- **Jobs / Recruitment**: The First Place for Good Moves in the Community Sector
- **Best of Community**: The First and Best Place for Community

Buy Supplies & Be Informed

- **Community Marketplace**: Providing all Community Groups with Excellent Value Products and Services
- **The Insurance & Risk Management Centre**: Helping Community Groups Manage Risk and Secure Insurance
- **TechCommunity Centre**: Technology Resources and Services for Community Groups.

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

Helping you help others. That's our business.

Working in a community organisation can be extremely rewarding. But it can also be demanding, particularly when your time and financial resources are limited. For many years now, Westpac has worked closely with not-for-profit businesses right around Australia. This has allowed us to gain a deep understanding of the financial pressures your organisation faces. It's also helped us develop a unique package of financial solutions that can free up more of your time and money for what you're really passionate about: helping others.



EASY BUSINESS!

To find out more about Westpac's banking solutions for community organisations please call 1300 660 953 during business hours.