

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

December 2006 - Issued December 6, 2006

Welcome to the latest edition of **Our Community Matters**, your regular free community sector update. It is yet another benefit of membership of www.ourcommunity.com.au – the premier destination for Australia's 700,000 community, education and not-for-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 donations 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

In this Issue

Contents

1. **Community View by Rhonda Galbally – New Year, New Visions**
2. **'Tis the Season for List-mania! Spreading your message during the Silly Season**
3. **Australian Giving Week 2006 – Community, start your giving!**
4. **Live Now, Give Later: Australians urged to think beyond the grave**
5. **Top 10 freebies available on Our Community website**
6. **Insurance breakthrough for small not-for-profit organisations**
7. **Ten reasons not to take action in your community**
8. **Social networks influence personal decisions: Study**
9. **Connectivity a key to regional communities' competitiveness**
10. **Size Matters: The ongoing debate over big versus small**
11. **Community Briefs**
12. **Good Moves: Community Jobs and Board/Committee vacancies**
13. **Fast Forward**
14. **About Our Community**

New Year, New Visions

Well, the world has gone round the sun another time, and here we are again nearly at Christmas; we're decorating the traditional Christmas tree, we're looking forward to the traditional Boxing Day test match, and we've already had the traditional Labor Party leadership challenge.

All these traditional repetitions can lull us into believing that things are going on much as before.

But things are going to change.

In Australia we're reaching a moment when many years of gradual change reaches a tipping point. On water, on weather, and on the constitutional division of responsibility in this and other areas, the tectonic plates are shifting.

What does this mean for the community sector? Let's run a quick SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis about what's facing the sector in the all-new New Year.

Strengths

1. Australia is a rich country, and getting richer all the time. Our wealth is patchily applied, certainly, and inequality is a real problem, but we are an order of magnitude more prosperous than our parents were. This doesn't mean we're happier, but it does mean that we have greater resources to do the things we decide we need.
2. Australia is a generous country. When we're called upon and we can see the need, as with the tsunamis, we show that we can measure up.
3. Australia isn't a stupid country. If there's a problem, we can find our way round to a place to deal with it.
4. Australia has a vigorous, skilled and highly dedicated community sector that is working hard to build a better community.
5. Australia is a responsive country. We have a political system that is, in the end, responsive to what the people want.

Weaknesses

1. Australia doesn't know how well off it is. People don't realise how large their income is and how good it feels to give some of it away.
2. Australia's community groups haven't raised the community's expectations. We're still grateful for coins rather than notes, hundreds rather than thousands, speeches rather than changes.
3. Too many Australians have grown used to saying "Somebody should do something about this!" rather than "Let's do something about this!"
4. Australia's community sector is not organised. At the peak level we don't have any independent leverage with government, and at the grass roots we don't have a consciousness of our own local activities as part of a larger civil society.
5. The state and federal political systems provide endless opportunities for buck-passing, point-scoring and time-wasting.

Opportunities

1. There is finally, after years of denial, general agreement across the spectrum that the threats we face – hundred-year droughts, continuous bushfires, climate change – are so massive that we will have to be jolted out of our old ruts.
2. Problems that can only be addressed by communities working together will foster a new commitment to co-operative effort rather than the heedless free-market individualism that has been undermining community solidarity in recent years.
3. New technology provides us with new forms of community. We can debate, organise, interact, and lobby effortlessly and almost without cost. What would the community groups of the last century have made of technology that provides a virtual printing press in every person's pocket?
4. Our continuing immigration flow enriches us with new cultural diversity – a diversity that can't be wished away or demonised, still less reversed – opening up new options to challenge our thinking and shake up our habits of thought.
5. Australians are hungry for vision. There is a window for open consideration of civic values – for asking where our planning fell short, where our assumptions went wrong, how we can do things differently.

Threats

1. We face hundred-year droughts, continuous bushfires, and ecological threats. We are in a very bad situation. We are starting to act, but slowly and so, so late.
2. Unless we keep our heads, we may use the expense of dealing with environmental threats as an excuse for not acting on other fronts. Will community groups pander to donor fatigue and complain about the money going to saving the Murray, or realise that we can do both – we can walk and chew gum at the same time.
3. We have not yet learned to use new technology to build community spirit at the organisational level, and it is changing continuously and confusingly. We will have to ask our primary school students to lead us through the maze.
4. We have a political system that sometimes seems to view the community sector as a rival or a servant rather than a partner. Governments prefer the community sector to sit down and shut up rather than stand up and speak out. We must show we can bounce back when pressed.
5. We must change our lives.

There are no guarantees, but this is a time when we should bring out our demands and dust off our hopes. We must learn to surf the coming changes, and not to let them drag us under. This is a year of possibility.

Rhonda Galbally AO
Chief Executive Officer, www.ourcommunity.com.au

[Back to Top](#)

2. 'Tis the Season for List-mania! Spreading your message during the Silly Season

Lists.

As we start sliding down the slope to Christmas and the Silly Season, lists seem to be everywhere.

The media love a good list – be it a Top 10, a Best-Of, or a Worst-Ever. And often it's at the end of the year that these lists start to become more and more common.

With the sources of "real" news drying up, or going on summer vacation, newsrooms often need something else to fill the space ... and what better to do exactly that than a quirky list of the best or worst people, movies, songs, news or sports stories for the year.

But as several items in this special "List-mania" edition of *Our Community Matters* show, they don't need to be silly to get a run. Lists can provide a really useful tool for shedding light on important issues as well.

Your group can make the most of the media's thirst for lists at this time of year by preparing one of your own. Send it to your members, donors and supporters as well in case it doesn't get a run in the papers.

Here is a list (!) of ideas to get you started:

1. **Top Three** challenges for your local community leaders (politicians, councillors, etc.) for the New Year
2. **Five Key** achievements of your group (or your community) during 2006, and the Top Five challenges for 2007 (including survival remedies)
3. **Six of the Best** ways your community can lend support to your group or the community at large during 2007
4. **Eight is Enough** things your group offers the community
5. **Top Ten** "presents" you'd love "Santa" (i.e. your local community) to put in your group's Christmas Stocking

Of course, it's not enough to just issue a list, you need to have the experience and credentials to back up your point of view – so make sure your list is appropriately focused.

For more information on how to get your story into the media, visit the Marketing, Media and Post Centre, an initiative of Our Community and Australia Post, at www.ourcommunity.com.au/mmp.

[Back to Top](#)

3. Australian Giving Week 2006 – Community, Start Your Giving!

Right now we're in the midst of Australian Giving Week – a nation-wide event designed to focus attention on the many ways that individuals, families, businesses and groups can make a difference to the community in the lead-up to Christmas.

We've been lucky enough to receive some great media support for this initiative, and you may well have seen articles in the papers, heard a piece on the radio or seen a TV item about it – but in case you've missed it, here are some of the key events taking place:

- Promotion of the **Australian Giving Centre** – a free online donations service, which currently lists almost 900 community group appeals, including some specific Christmas appeals
- Tips for **individuals** and **businesses** on how to focus their giving by developing a personal giving plan
- Release of the **Australian Giving Card** – a special community greeting card that passes \$2 from each purchase on to a community group, with beneficiaries chosen by the sender or the recipient
- Launch of the **Giving Week Auction**, which will see the personal items of 14 Australian luminaries – including Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, Sir Gustav Nossal, Olympian Grant Hackett, AFL legend Kevin Sheedy and much-loved author Bryce Courtenay – go under the hammer for the benefit of selected community groups
- Listing of all of the places where individuals, businesses and politicians can buy Christmas **cards** and **trees** that support a community organisation
- Launch of a new website at **www.givingweek.com.au** to collect all of the resources above, and much more. The website includes sections for individuals, businesses, MPs and the media

Another key feature of Australian Giving Week is the distribution of a list of **50 Ways for Individuals to Give to the Community this Christmas**' (and a corresponding list for **local businesses**). Since this edition of *Our Community Matters* is all about lists, here are 15 of the best:

1. **Ask your friends to give money, not presents**

If you're one of the many people who already has most things they need (and many you don't), **ask your friends** not to give you a Christmas present this year but instead donate the money to a community group you nominate. It'll make for a more meaningful Christmas than another pair of novelty socks or set of hankies. Instead of giving out Christmas presents yourself, make a donation on your friends' behalf to an appropriate community group. **Give your friends a card** telling them that you have made a donation and provide the receipt.

2. **Get your kids involved**

Talk to your kids about scaling back your own family's Christmas present-giving. Encourage your children to think about the community groups that make a difference in their lives by donating a few coins, or by doing a few jobs around the house in exchange for a donation to a group. Ask them to pick some toys and games they have outgrown that they would like to contribute to a community group that works with children, or can sell the toys to help fund its work.

3. **Buy wisely**

Buy an extra toy or present this Christmas and put it in the collection box at your local shopping centre, office or church. Many department stores, such as Kmart (under **the Wishing Tree**), collect presents to be distributed to disadvantaged groups by community organisations such as the Salvation Army and Brotherhood of St Laurence. You can help the community when buying your own gifts as well – many groups (**Oxfam Community Aid Abroad** and the **Oaktree Foundation** to take just two examples) sell some great goods online.

4. **Buy an extra can**

During your weekly grocery shopping, put an extra can of non-perishable food in your trolley and place it in the donation bin at your supermarket (if you're in Victoria, Leader Community Newspapers' Food for Families appeal is a great way to get involved – visit **www.leadernewspapers.com.au** for more info on where to donate), or give it to a group (a **food bank**, for example) that can use it to help others. Similarly, buy an extra can of pet food at the supermarket and donate it to the local **animal shelter**.

5. **Donate a gold coin to a good cause**

If you're planning to host a Christmas party or Christmas drinks at your home, ask your guests to throw in a gold coin for a nominated community group, or put a jar in the middle of the table and have guests donate \$1 for every bad joke, "bloopers" or extra helping of Christmas pudding. At the end of the night, put the names of several groups in a hat and draw one or two out. Buy the wine for your celebrations from a community group as well.

6. **Party till you drop**

Most of the community groups you belong to will have Christmas parties. Go along, have a party pie and a glass of cask wine, and let them know how much you support them. Offer to help the group put together handwritten holiday cards to everyone who's helped the organisation over the year.

7. **Donate blood**

You can give a gift that is more precious than money - your blood. The Red Cross is always looking for blood donors and Christmas and the New Year holiday period is no exception. Giving blood is safe and easy. See www.arcbs.redcross.org.au for all the details on what you need to do.

8. **Check to see if your neighbours need some help**

If you have elderly friends or neighbours who are housebound (or just struggle to get out) offer to help them with their Christmas shopping or other errands. If your friend or neighbour is a full-time carer, offer to step in and help for a couple of hours so they can get out and do a bit of shopping or just have a break.

9. **Re-use your cards**

Donate used Christmas cards to a school or a kindergarten to use in their artwork, or drop them in to a free **Australia Post** pack to be sent to Planet Ark and made into toilet paper.

10. **Think outside the square**

People with other cultural, religious or ethnic backgrounds don't celebrate Christmas, but that's no need to leave them out of the festive season. Invite them along to all of your events and share in theirs as well.

11. **Get involved in Christmas**

Don't stay at home and watch the parade pass you by. Get involved in your community's local Christmas activities, whether that involves singing (or listening to) carols, attending a fair or a function, or taking part in a community get-together.

12. **Take in the view of the Christmas Lights**

More and more people are getting into the Christmas spirit by decorating their homes with Christmas lights. Take your kids (or yourself) to check out the lights in your local area. Some particularly well-decorated places also collect coin donations for their favourite community groups. If you're decorating your own house, do it for a good cause by entering the "**Wish Upon A Christmas Light**" competition run by the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Australia.

13. **Have a day out**

Enjoy the summer and the extra time with your family and friends by organising a day in the park or at the beach - and pick up the rubbish while you're there!

14. **Write a letter to your friends and family**

Now is as good a time as any to reconnect with friends and family members who you haven't seen for a while. Drop someone a quick line to let them know you're thinking of them.

15. **Email this list to your friends and family, and your boss!**

Email this list to your friends or family, and ask your employer to post it on the office noticeboard or work intranet as a way of encouraging people to think of their local communities at this time of year. Print it out and put it on your wall at home.

Giving Week is an initiative of www.ourcommunity.com.au and is supported by Westpac Bank, which also supports the Australian Giving Centre – a free community resource that has been used by more than 35,000 individuals and corporates and has collected more than \$5 million in online donations to Australian community groups. Visit www.givingweek.com.au for more.

Celebrity Giving Auctions!

Bid on amazing items donated by your favourite celebrity

All funds raised go to deserving Australian Community Groups!



[Back to Top](#)

4. Live Now, Give Later: Australians urged to think beyond the grave

While we're on the topic of giving ...

Australians aren't big on charitable bequests. Only 8% of us think outside the family when making our wills, which is a pretty low figure when you consider that the general level of prosperity is currently at a historic high.

According to Professor McGregor-Lowndes, from the Queensland University of Technology, Australians are 1½ times more generous than Canadians and on par with the British, but only half as generous as the Americans, so there's a lot of ground to make up.

There are excuses – in other countries, governments do more to encourage legacies through tax breaks and tax penalties – but it's still not encouraging, which is why we should all welcome the initiative taken by a group of Australian charities to try and shake loose a few more bequests.

The Australian Red Cross, Mission Australia, the Heart Foundation and The Cancer Council have joined forces for the first time to ask Australia "Do you have the Will to change the future?"

Together they've launched the **Include a Charity** campaign, designed to raise awareness of the importance of updating your will and including a bequest to charity.

Despite the comparatively small proportion of post-life donors, bequests make up a vital and increasingly important part of not-for-profit fundraising, and without them many organisations would have to close or cut back. If Include a Charity succeeds, we all gain.

The Include a Charity coalition has also issued a list (!) of Australia's top five suburbs for bequesting. Brighton (Vic) comes top, then Castle Hill in NSW, then Point Macquarie, then a four-way tie between Frankston, Camberwell, Glen Iris, and Hawthorn – honours about even between Sydney (two in the top three) and Melbourne (six in the top nine, and first).

Of course, those suburbs give more because they're richer to begin with, so don't feel that you've been left out; your suburb will give enough if you ask it politely. You don't have to be a millionaire to leave a charitable bequest – anybody can do it, and should.

The other important thing to note is that a bequest **does not** need to mean the family home – \$500 or even \$5000 from a \$200,000 estate would hardly be missed, yet it could make a huge difference to a hard-working community group.

The main barrier to higher bequest rates is that many of us still feel uncomfortable raising the topic of death. Here are a few pointers to get you started:

- Put a request for donations on your group's email signature and provide a link to your donations webpage (which include "bequests" as a giving option)
- Put a plug in your newsletter for forward financial planning
- If you have any solicitors among your membership, give them your material to bring out when advising clients
- Put a phone number for 'Donations and Bequests' on your letterhead
- Start a trend - change your own will
- Give a big play to any bequests you do get; allot them a page in the annual report, name a room in your building after them, give other people the idea.

Australia currently sees 10,000 bequests a year. If there were 20,000, you'd have a much better chance of scoring.

More information on encouraging and setting up wills and bequests is provided at the Funding Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding (click the link to "Free Help Sheets & Resources").

[Back to Top](#)

5. Top 20 freebies available on Our Community website – www.ourcommunity.com.au

With another year drawing to a close, it's a good time to issue a reminder about all of the great resources available online through the Our Community website – resources that have been developed to help build a stronger, more effective community sector.

So in the spirit of this "List-mania" edition of *Our Community Matters*, here are our Top 20 Freebies:

- 1. Help Sheets.** The Our Community website is brimming with free help sheets covering practically every topic relevant to running a community organisation, including tips on how to get a group started (including fundraising and other relevant legislation), board/governance skills and strategies, how to give (and receive) financial and in-kind donations, how to put in place a bountiful fundraising strategy, everything you need to know about maintaining a successful community-business partnership, how to minimise bank fees and improve your group's financial health and monitoring, technology tips, marketing and media advice, and insurance & risk management checklists.
Explore the site at www.ourcommunity.com.au.
- 2. Giving Listing.** This is the place where you can reach the community and tell them how to give you their money, time, blankets, clothing, furniture, computers, mobile phones, bikes, and land.
Find out more and view the listings at www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving.
- 3. Online Donations.** The online donations service at the Australian Giving Centre is administered by Our Community and supported by Westpac. The service is totally free for not-for-profit organisations – allowing you to set up your own sophisticated appeal page without the hassle or expense of setting up your own secure payments system.
Find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/receivedonations.
- 4. Partnerships Ideas Bank.** Don't sit on the sidelines – get engaged with your local business community. The Partnerships Ideas Bank offers a listing of community-business partnerships already in existence, providing ideas for future connections.
Find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/partnershipsideas.
- 5. Community-Business Partnerships Brokerage Service.** An initiative of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership and housed on the Our Community website, this resource allows community organisations to register their details, and businesses to search for possible matches.
Find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/partnershipsbrokerage.
- 6. Board Matching Service.** This service is designed to help individuals make a deeper, longer lasting connection with their community, and to allow community groups to access a new pool of skilled and willing helpers. Community organisations can register details of their board/committee vacancies, which are included in a searchable online database as well as the *Good Moves* and *Our Community Matters* newsletters. Dozens of successful matches have been made since this service was introduced.
Register your vacancy or search current listings at www.ourcommunity.com.au/board-match.
- 7. Policy Bank.** As the old adage goes, "None of us is as smart as all of us". The Policy Bank creates a shared resource that takes the hard-won knowledge of one organisation and shares it with many. Dozens of free template policies are loaded on the site in Word format, allowing groups to download and adapt them to suit their needs.
Visit the Policy Bank at www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank.
- 8. The Fundraising Wizard.** The Fundraising Wizard allows you to get a quick snapshot of how your fundraising efforts stack up, highlighting areas where you're doing well and others where you might be able to improve. Coupled with the Top 10 free fundraising ideas and other Funding Centre resources, the Wizard will help to build a stronger fundraising strategy and, in turn, a stronger group.
Complete the Wizard at www.ourcommunity.com.au/wizard.
- 9. Guide for Community Treasurers.** If this book was for sale, it would be a community best-seller. Thankfully, it's not for sale – it's free! Developed by Our Community and Westpac, this guide includes pointers on keeping the books, asset registers, cash flow and tax, as well as a section to help you understand how to better manage your accounts.
Download the Guide for Community Treasurers at www.ourcommunity.com.au/treasurers.
- 10. Community Idol.** Every year we conduct a search to find the community group that stands out from the pack and in doing so, we work to provide nation-wide recognition for the invaluable social role played by Australia's 700,000 community groups. Entry is free and the short-listed finalists get an invaluable promotion and marketing opportunity (and there are some fantastic prizes as well).
Find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/idol.

11. **Risk Management Help.** Public liability insurance has been a bugbear for the Australian community sector for a number of years now. Our Community has been working to make insurance more affordable for community organisations and recently formed a partnership with insurance company GIO, which is now providing public liability insurance designed specifically for not-for-profit organisations (see Part 6 of this newsletter). The product includes a free risk management tool that, if completed, provides a 10% discount on your premium.
Find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/insurance.
12. **The Lessons Bank.** The Lessons Bank is designed to house all of the key knowledge and hard-won truths accumulated through thousands of projects and programs carried out around Australia. Case studies are great, but this collection is different: not only does it tell you about what was achieved, it tells you how it was achieved – what worked, and why.
Find out how you can contribute at www.ourcommunity.com.au/lessonsbank.
13. **The Plans & Tools Bank.** This area of the Our Community website – part of the Centre for What Works – is designed to house a range of free plans and tools that community groups can download and refer to, saving time and money.
Find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/plansbank.
14. **Media & Marketing Resources** – Our Community and Australia Post teamed up to produce the Marketing, Media and Post Centre, which includes everything you need to plan for and mount successful media and marketing strategies or campaigns. Including free images & templates, a list of media contacts, “top tips” for getting a media or mail marketing strategy up and running, and dozens of free help sheets, this is a key resource for all Australian community groups.
Visit the Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketingmediapost.
15. **Leadership Wisdom** – Community building can be a tough, thankless task. If you're feeling alone and unappreciated and in need of an extra push or a bit of inspiration, our Leadership Centre can provide a real shot in the arm. Find out what great Australian leaders such as Justice Michael Kirby, Prof. Fiona Stanley, Ian Kiernan, and Fiona Smith have to say about community leadership.
Transcripts of their interviews are online at www.ourcommunity.com.au/leadership.
16. **Communities in Control Speeches.** Lift your head from the daily grind and find out more about how communities are taking control and working to build a better world. We've transcribed and uploaded speeches from all past Communities in Control conferences – it's the next best thing to attending yourself! The speeches can be downloaded at www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic.
17. **Good Moves Newsletter.** People work in the community sector because they believe in the values of the sector – things like equality, empowerment, and transformation of lives. Make your next move in the community sector a good one by signing up to receive the free *Good Moves* jobs bulletin.
Sign up for the newsletter or post your own vacancy at www.ourcommunity.com.au/goodmoves.
18. **Calendar of Key Events** – Find out what's going on around Australia, including key anniversary and celebration days, Australian school and public holidays and election dates.
The Calendar of Key Events is at www.ourcommunity.com.au/calendar.
19. **Directory of Community Organisations.** We have compiled Australia's most comprehensive listing of community organisations to make it easier for you to contact some of the 700,000 community, education and not-for-profit groups that make Australia such an exciting and diverse place to live.
Sign your group up or search for others in your “space” at www.ourcommunity.com.au/directory.
20. **Our Community Matters newsletter.** This newsletter is provided free of charge to ensure every community organisation in Australia has access to the latest news, information and resources affecting the community sector. It's become a much-loved community resource – a way to stay in touch and keep on top of all the developments that matter to you.
Read past issues at www.ourcommunity.com.au/ocmatters.

[Back to Top](#)

6. Insurance breakthrough for small not-for-profit organisations

Our Community, in conjunction with GIO, has recently announced the availability of a new public liability insurance product designed **specifically for small not-for-profit organisations**.

This product is available at a flat rate of \$300 (approx. \$360 including taxes and duties) for a limit of liability of \$5 million, or \$480 (approx. \$580 including charges) for a limit of liability of \$10 million.

To be eligible for this product, an organisation must not:

1. Have an annual turnover exceeding \$50,000;
2. Require a Limit of Liability exceeding \$10 million;
3. Have an "active" membership exceeding 20 persons;
4. Own any property (other than residential housing – e.g. members' homes)

GIO also offers a public liability product for larger groups and you can access this by contacting Erin Gilchrist, NFPO Liability Department, Level 10, 117 Clarence St, Sydney NSW 2000, or phone GIO on 1300 763 117 (quote reference 2134); fax to 1300 799 786, or email to nfpo@suncorp.com.au.

[Back to Top](#)

7. Ten reasons not to take action in your community

You put down the newspaper (or the letter from Council) or turn away from the TV or the radio and say, with steam coming out of your ears, "That's not right!"

What's going on is really unfair or unpleasant or dictatorial or dishonest. Something must be done! And nobody seems to be stepping forward.

A still-small voice cuts into your furious mutterings, and the angel of your better nature says "Well, **you** could do something..."

After a second's horrified pause the demon on your other shoulder leaps in to dissuade you. These 10 points cover what he usually says – and what you should be saying to cut him down.

- **"I don't have time – the season finale of *Prison Break* is on!"**
Record it. If you don't know how, ask your children.
- **"There are a lot of more important problems in the world!"**
So what we should do is work out what the worst problem of all is, fix that, and then go down the list till we come to this particular problem? That's not the way things work. We can multi-task and tackle all of them.
- **"Nobody will back me up and I'll look an idiot."**
You don't know how much support you'll get until you unfurl your flag and see who rallies around. If you think it's important, others probably will too.
- **"Someone else is probably going to do something."**
If everybody else thinks like that, nothing happens – and the community freewheels to a stop as everybody waits for a lead.
- **"It's someone else's job."**
You're probably right, but the evidence is that they're not doing their job, and unless you kick up a huge fuss they're not going to.
- **"Who'll listen to me?"**
You're someone who knows what's right and what's wrong, and you'd be surprised how important that is in making your case. If you can explain where you're coming from you'll have a good chance of persuading your listeners.
- **"It's all very complicated."**
The important parts are actually pretty simple. Something's not working properly and needs to be fixed.
- **"You can't win."**
Before you start, the giants look unbeatable, the castles look impregnable, and the powerful look very, very powerful. From their side, though, the giants know about their crippling rheumatism, the castles worry that half the archers may actually be on your side, and the powerful know that their power depends on not too many people rocking the boat. You're stronger than you think.
- **"I'll get into trouble."**
A little caution is probably helpful, but remember that you've got right on your side, and you've probably got the media on your side (because you're the underdog), and you've got all of those people who believe in the same things that you do holding your coat.
- **"I'll do it tomorrow."**
No you won't. Seize the day.

The questions that you really have to ask are "If not me, who?" And "If not now, when?"

8. Social networks influence personal decisions: Study

Social networks strongly influence people's decisions to make "major lifestyle changes", according to the preliminary findings of a joint research project being undertaken by Deakin University in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and Our Community.

The study, which is spearheaded by Deakin University researchers Associate Professor Ken Reed and Dr Betsy Blunsdon, sets out to better understand the relationship between people and the communities in which they live.

The second stage of this three-year project is now complete. In all, the project has four stages, which aim to:

- Build a knowledge base of community infrastructure,
- Conduct a survey of Victorian residents to understand individuals' experiences of living in their communities,
- Complete a series of in-depth community case studies, and
- Investigate the role social networks in lifestyle decisions as part of a PhD project.

The first stage of the project is ongoing, and sees researchers compiling a base of information on community infrastructure by collecting and analysing information sourced from national censuses, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and business directory data.

The second stage of the survey saw more than 2250 Victorians spread across 60 postcodes complete a mixture of telephone interviews and postal questionnaires which looked at individuals' experiences in the community and how communities impacted on their lives.

According to Dr Blunsdon, analysis of this data is continuing, with the community case study section of the research project to begin upon completion of the analysis. It is hoped these case studies will be completed by the middle of next year.

The final part of the study – the PhD section being completed by student Carmel Goulding under the supervision of project investigators – is using in-depth interviews and case studies to better understand how personal values and commitment to social networks (family, friends, partners, workmates and social and community groups) influence perceptions of choice.

Early findings from this part of the study have found these social networks "exert a strong influence on decisions (by people) to make major lifestyle changes".

It also appears that once someone makes a decision to make a significant lifestyle change, issues of community "connectiveness" and even social dislocation can often occur.

For more information on the study, contact Dr Blunsdon on betsy.blunsdon@deakin.edu.au, or for the PhD study, contact Ms Goulding on egou@deakin.edu.au.

[Back to Top](#)

9. Connectivity a key to regional communities' competitiveness: report

The latest instalment of a key Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) report has pinpointed a lack of connectivity – particularly in the areas of telecommunications and internet services – as a major driver in widening the gap between rich and poor regions and their communities.

The ALGA's ninth annual *State of the Regions* report, released late last month, found those regions with high-quality connectivity and ample access to technology such as broadband internet were growing wealthier.

This meant the gap between these regions, usually the larger Australian cities and metropolitan areas, and those without that access – most often rural and regional areas of Australia – had continued to widen.

The report pointed to poor connectivity as a big obstacle to regions attracting skilled or well-trained workers and new industries that rely on technology and connectivity.

The result is a vicious circle – regions without new or innovative industries or well-trained workers ultimately end up with more low-income earners, creating an unattractive environment for young people and skilled

workers, who stay away. Stagnation results, and the region is left facing increased challenges to improve its standing and productivity.

The *State of the Regions* report does, however, offer a glimmer of hope, providing examples of regional towns that have successfully innovated, created new opportunities and are moving forward.

One such town is Bendigo, in central Victoria, where a Community Telco has been set up by the council and a local business.

According to the report, the telco offers "line rental, internet access, local and long-distance calls on fixed lines and mobile telephone services, mirroring the services offered by larger competitors".

The ALGA predicts councils in regional areas will play a much greater role in helping provide vital broadband internet services – particularly given commercial operators are considered "highly unlikely" to look after these regions if commercial opportunities are limited.

The report also asserts that regional councils can not rely just on rate revenue to achieve greater regional equity and play their role as "a facilitator of regional development", saying councils needed a \$2.3 billion injection of funds just to bring "lagging regions up to average standard for regional growth" and to provide infrastructure attractive to business.

[Back to Top](#)

10. Size Matters ... The ongoing debate over big versus small

Are smaller community groups better or worse than bigger ones?

Obviously there's no hard-and-fast answer – there are triumphs and disasters at all levels – but there's a real debate underway in the UK over whether public policy should be skewed to encourage the small fry.

The argument for small groups is that they're able to be leaner, more flexible, more innovative, less bureaucratic, and more independent than the large institutional agencies.

Charity: the Spectre of Over-regulation and State Dependency, a new report by Richard Smith and Philip Whittington of the Centre for Policy Studies, complains that:

- While the UK has an impressive 160,000 charities, the sector is still dominated by a small number of large ones: a mere 511 charities represent 45% of all charitable income.
- While donations from the general public grew by just 7% in cash terms between 2000/01 and 2003/04, income from the state has increased by 38% over the same period, and for large charities the state is now the most important paymaster.
- Large charities spend £1,072 (A \$2685) on fundraising and publicity costs for each £10,000 (A\$25,044) income, while the smallest charities spend only £306 (A\$766).
- Public confidence in large charities appears to be waning, and donations from the public appear to be sustained only through expensive marketing efforts.
- Large charities are developing an increasingly corporate style, and the average top salary at large charities is now £83,000 (A\$207,973).

Michael Norton, author of *365 Ways to Change the World* and director of the Centre for Innovation in Voluntary Action, is heavily critical of the large aid agencies. He says that the separation of their fundraising departments from those doing the work has led to ethical problems and marginalised supporters, giving them little scope for real involvement.

"The big charities are now treating their donors as punters," he argues.

Other agencies, however, have different views. According to Karl Wilding, head of research at umbrella group the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), there is little difference in costs between different sized organisations.

"The amount spent on things other than delivering services is broadly the same across organisations of all sizes," he says. "They just spend it on slightly different things." Large organisations tend to have lower administration costs, due to their economies of scale, but spend more on fundraising, while the opposite is true for smaller groups.

Again, although everybody agrees that small groups with close ties to the local community should be encouraged, it's difficult to do this on large projects without accepting higher risk, and it's the large projects that make up the bulk of the work.

There's little dispute about the advantages smaller groups can have – there's just no agreement yet on how to best harness them, given the difficulties they face in winning competitive tenders for public service contracts and the equally competitive fundraising environment. The NCVO has taken the path of recommending that the large charities work in partnership with their smaller community cousins, but it's not easy to operationalise this across the sector.

Our Community, too, is committed to such cooperation. In the words of its **Communities in Control Manifesto**:

“Within the community sector itself there is an escalating need for collaboration between large and smaller community organisations. Larger community organisations should respect the value of local community-owned and community-run groups and acknowledge their pre-eminent position vis-à-vis prevention. Instead of large community organisations gobbling up small groups and/or establishing their own centrally controlled programs for local delivery, they should support already existing small community groups to deliver programs within frameworks that are locally designed and thus locally relevant.”

There's a real need to work these points through in theory and in practice, and it's likely that the English debate will be echoed over here.

[Back to Top](#)

11. Community Briefs

[Help us improve food regulation for your community group](#)

Many community groups prepare and distribute food, either through their fundraising activities or in catering to community needs.

We live in an era of safety consciousness – some of it driven by direct government regulation, some by perceived risk, some by the need to comply with insurers' instructions or by fear or litigation.

Many small organisations feel hard-pressed by increased regulatory complexity and its accompanying costs.

Our Community is working with the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, which has been asked to undertake an inquiry into food regulation in Victoria. As part of this work, we're undertaking a national survey to quantify the impact, burdens and benefits placed on the not-for-profit sector by existing food regulation.

We urge all groups that are involved with preparation and/or distribution of food to take part in this survey. It's posted at **www.ourcommunity.com.au/foodsurvey**.

[New dates for community governance qualification](#)

Due to popular demand, we have added two new sessions comprising four consecutive days for people wanting to complete the new Certificate IV in Business (Governance).

This course, which is offered by Our Community together with BSI Learning, provides practical skills, knowledge and resources to ensure improved governance and direction – delivered through a combination of workshops, workbooks and in-practice assessment.

A key attraction of this course is its flexibility – each component of the course is offered several times during the year, with participants able to pick a date that suits them. Participants can also now opt to complete the course over four consecutive days: **Feb 19,20, 21 & 22** and **May 7, 8, 9 & 10, 2007**.

Participants who complete the course will receive the Certificate IV and will also be admitted as a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Community Practice and Governance – Australia's peak professional training organisation for staff and board/committee members of community organisations.

You can download a program brochure at **www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/governanceprogram.pdf**, or for more information contact Patrick Moriarty by emailing **patrickm@ourcommunity.com.au**.

Discounts on your rego

Community organisations, charities and not-for-profits are eligible for many discounts and concessions that aren't always widely known about – often even among those in the sector.

One important saving that a member alerted us to recently relates to discounts on car registrations and stamp duty for community organisations. For example:

- In New South Wales, there are exemptions available for public hospitals and organisations involved in charitable or welfare work – as outlined [here](#).
- In South Australia, there are significant discounts on registration and stamp duty fees for eligible community groups – as outlined [here](#):
- In Western Australia, there are also concessions available to eligible community groups such as charitable or religious organisations and youth groups – as outlined [here](#):

Other states have concessions as well and more information on these will be contained in the next issue of our **Raising Funds** newsletter (as the old saying goes, a penny saved is a penny earned) – due out in February.

If you can't wait that long, you should contact the relevant State Government department directly.

Grants survey still open

A reminder that you still have a chance to have your say about grants management in Australia by taking part in the latest Grants in Australia Survey – posted online at www.ourcommunity.com.au/grantsurvey.

The survey is designed to discover what grantseekers think funders and grantmakers are doing well, and where their performance could be improved.



The results of the survey will be fed into Our Community's second annual **Best Practice in Grants Management Conference**, which is being held in Melbourne on February 23, 2006.

This is the key national conference for grantmakers and grants managers in Australia, tackling head-on a wide range of contemporary grantmaking trends and tensions.

This year's conference also features a special half-day MasterClass for local government grants managers. Find out more at www.ourcommunity.com.au/bestpracticeconference2006.

Fresh perspectives in fundraising

The Fundraising Institute of Australia (FIA) will be staging its 30th International Fundraising Conference in Melbourne on February 24-27, 2007.

This year's conference – titled ***fresh PERSPECTIVES*** – will give fundraisers the opportunity to develop their core skills and learn about new and forward-thinking fundraising ideas and techniques.

Presenters include philanthropist, activist and entertainer Olivia Newton-John, AFL Foundation CEO Andrew Demetriou and Crazy John CEO John Ilhan.

Our Community CEO Rhonda Galbally will also speak during the event, tackling the topic of Leadership in the Not-for-Profit Sector on Sunday, February 25.

Click here to access the conference program – early bird closes December 15.

Celebrating Human Rights Day

This Sunday – December 10 – is Human Rights Day.

The day commemorates the 1948 adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – and it's a good opportunity to familiarise yourself (or re-familiarise yourself) with some of the articles in that historic document.

To download a copy of the Declaration (including a Plain English version) visit the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' website at <http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/udhr.htm>

Legally Speaking: WorkChoices update

On November 13, 2006 the Australian Government announced amendments to the Workplace Relations legislation. The amendments will:

- protect employee redundancy pay entitlements;
- address the potential for increased costs associated with annual leave accrual and personal/carer's leave payment;
- provide a default right for an employer to stand down employees where work is unavailable due to factors outside the employer's control;
- enable employees to cash out personal/carer's leave; and
- address concerns about the burden associated with new record keeping requirements.

The record-keeping requirements will be streamlined so that the focus is on records that are necessary to facilitate compliance with the Standard, or relevant industrial instrument and protected award conditions. The changes will reflect the pre-WorkChoices requirements. Employers will continue to have to:

- keep records relating to superannuation contributions either payable each pay period or set aside on behalf of the employee;
- keep any agreement authorised under the Standard (e.g. copies of any elections to cash out leave; averaging of hours arrangements);
- issue payslips – the content of which would reflect the new record-keeping requirements.

Regarding records of hours worked, employers will only be required to record those hours for which an employee is entitled to overtime or other penalty rates, rather than all hours worked. This is similar to the relevant pre-WorkChoices record-keeping requirements.

However, employers will be required to keep records of hours worked by casuals and irregular part-time employees when they are paid on an hourly basis.

The requirements have been designed so that there are sufficient records to show compliance with the Standard or an industrial instrument while significantly reducing the administrative burden on employers. For example, an employer will be required to keep records that:

- allow the basic periodic or piece rate of pay to be determined for each employee;
- allow protected award conditions such as penalty rates, loadings, allowances or incentive based payments to be determined;
- show the accrual, leave taken and the balance of the employee's entitlement to annual leave and personal/ carer's leave (and any election to forgo leave); and
- show those hours for which an employee is entitled to overtime or other penalty rates.

This information is provided by Richard Thompson, Principal of Archer Thompson Lawyers. If you require further advice in relation to this matter, an update of the other changes to the Workplace Relations laws or have any legal issues you wish to discuss please call Richard for a free initial consultation – Call 0411 867 795 or email richard@archerthompson.com.au for more information.

Update on changes to fundraising law

In the last issue of *Our Community Matters* we reported on the outcome of a recent Federal Court case ([Commissioner of Taxation v Word Investments Ltd \[2006\]](#)) expanding the scope of which fundraising methods can be used by a tax-free charity.

The court in that case found for the charity, and we said "this decision does make life rather easier for fundraisers".

Eventually, perhaps, but not just yet. The Australian Tax Office has **appealed**, and in the meantime will go on just as before. "The Tax Office will continue to apply its long held view of what is a charity ... pending the outcome of the appeal."

We said, too, that "It's still the case that this area of the law badly needs to be codified and simplified", and the to-ing and fro-ing over this case provides proof of that, if proof were needed.

Community services website launched

An Australia-first website aimed at attracting and retaining staff in the community services sector has been launched in Sydney.

Queensland Child Safety Minister Desley Boyle said the Community Workforce Village website would bring together a range of useful information and provide the community services sector with a forum for sharing resources and best practices to attract and retain staff.

An increasing demand for community services over the past decade was contributing to a staff shortage, she said.

"Both government and non-government community service organisations have reported a significant increase in demand driven by a range of factors including population growth, economic and social pressures and changing community expectations," she said.

Ms Boyle said the new website included links to research, statistics, recruitment sites and scholarship information, as well as a discussion forum.

The website – at www.communityworkforcevillage.org – is a national initiative led by the Queensland Department for Child Safety.

Community Classifieds

Educational resources free to a good home

Seaford Library in South Australia has some old library educational resources (teachers' resources) to give away. If you're interested, please contact Gus on (08) 8384 0049.

Desperately Seeking: crisis management policy

A Victorian community group has put out a call for a sample policy relating to management procedures for crisis events such as a terrorist attack or an aggressive client incident.

The group has consulted crime prevention police, who have talked about the need for evacuation and lock-down procedures and ways to manage "unwelcome clients" – including the development of a template letter to send to someone banning them from attending the premises.

If your group has already done some work on crisis management policies and procedures and is willing to help, please send any relevant material to kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au.

Information you send may also be standardised and loaded onto the Policy Bank at www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank.

Volunteers worth billions, says Queensland Government

Queensland's volunteer army is worth more than \$16 billion annually, according to figures in a report released to mark International Volunteer Day earlier this month.

Queensland Minister for Communities Warren Pitt said the report - *The Economic Value of Volunteering in Queensland* – showed how valuable a contribution volunteers made to the state.

The report put the value of volunteering in Queensland in 2004 at more than \$16 billion – a figure equating to an extra 387,000 jobs throughout the state.

Mr Pitt hoped the study would not only publicise the impact volunteers made, but would also encourage more volunteers to get involved.

The report was produced by Associate Professor Dr Duncan Ironmonger from the University of Melbourne, and is the first to quantify the value of both formal (organisational) and informal (individual) volunteering contributions to Queensland's society.

12. Community Jobs & Board/Committee vacancies



Good Moves :: Jobs Bulletin

www.ourcommunity.com.au

JOB VACANCY LISTINGS (Paid Positions)

New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
Project Officer	BISI Australia	Details
Employment Officer	Deaf Society of NSW	Details
Manager, Employment & Community Participation (E&CP)	Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)	Details

Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
Chief Executive Officer	Gulf Savannah Development	Details
Executive Officer	Redcliffe Neighbourhood Centre Association	Details

South Australia

Job Title	Organisation	
Kangaroo Island community grants facilitator	Mr Matthew Fowler	Details

Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
Health Promotion Worker	Women's Health Goulburn North East	Details
Information and Administration Officer	Women's Health Goulburn North East	Details
Publicist	Hootville Communications	Details
Executive Officer	Eating Disorders Foundation of Victoria	Details
Administration Assistant	Mission Australia	Details
Information Officer	Women's Health Victoria	Details
Senior Project Officers - "ENQUIRY Unit"	Berry Street Victoria	Details
Business Services Manager	Kildonan Child and Family Services	Details
Quality Living Support Worker	Vision Australia	Details
Mothers Support Worker	Prahran Mission Uniting Care	Details
Enterprise Development Officer - Network	The Brotherhood of St Laurence	Details
Volunteering Coordinator	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)	Details
Centre Manager	Walker Close Community Centre and Brooklyn Community Hall	Details
Fundraising Coordinator	CELAS - Spanish Latin American Welfare Centre Inc	Details
Director Marketing & Communications	Plan Australia	Details
Social Worker Locum	South Port UnitingCare	Details

BOARD/COMMITTEE VACANCY LISTINGS (Volunteer Positions)

Australian Capital Territory

Job Title	Organisation	
General Board Member	ACT ME/CFS Society Inc.	Details

New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
Treasurer, General Board Member	Vets Beyond Borders	Details

Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
General Board Member	The Panic Anxiety Disorder Assoc QLD Inc	Details

Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
General Board Member	Robinson Reserve Neighbourhood House	Details
General Board Member	Housing Resource & Support Service	Details
Arts Advisory Steering Committee	Youth Arts Steering Committee	Details
General Board Member	Footscray YMCA	Details
General Board Member	Mirboo North Community Care Inc.	Details
Treasurer, General Board Member	Everlived Inc.	Details

www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs

Good Moves Newsletter - Your best choice to find and advertise a job/board vacancy

13. Fast Forward

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send it onto your friends and fellow community groups in your area. People can sign up to receive their own copy at www.ourcommunity.com.au/signup.

If you would like to reproduce anything in this newsletter in your own newsletters or websites, you are free to do so. Please just add a small credit line, "courtesy of www.ourcommunity.com.au" and a direct link to the www.ourcommunity.com.au site if on a web page.

14. About Our Community

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise providing:

1. www.ourcommunity.com.au - Australia's most useful website and publishing house, encompassing the nation's largest and most diverse membership base and 12 knowledge and service hubs – accelerating the impact of Australia's 700,000 community organisations
2. [Australia's Giving Centre](#) – Helping individuals and business give in every way
3. [Australian Institute for Community Practice and Governance](#) - practical and accessible certificated training delivered locally through our training Institute
4. [Centre for Best Practice in Grantmaking](#) - the unique suite of grantmaking services for government
5. [Centre for Community-Business Partnerships](#) - cutting edge Corporate Social Responsibility resources for large, medium and small business and community organisations

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