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Our Community Matters is your free community sector update, brought to you by Our Community – the premier online destination for Australia's 700,000 community groups and schools. [Click here](#) to receive your free copy.



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1. Christine Nixon: What Really Matters

Christine Nixon will be a keynote speaker at the **Communities in Control Conference** on June 1.

Only a month ago, that wouldn't have been controversial. Today things are a little different. Let's go the long way round.

These days, the job of a commander isn't to leap into the front line and start wielding a spear: hasn't been since the days of Caesar. It isn't to stand around looking noble, either. And it isn't even necessarily to bark orders.

D-Day, it's fair to say, was a considerable responsibility.

General Eisenhower was the Supreme Commander at the time. In what many would regard as the most outstanding moment of his life, he knew perfectly well who was responsible for the outcome. He even wrote out a letter to be released in the event that the whole enterprise shattered into bloody ruin and ignominious failure. In that case, he said,

If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt, it is mine alone.

We can be thankful that he didn't have to use that letter.

By way of easing into current events, it's also worth looking at what Eisenhower actually did on D-Day. He got up at 7am. He washed, shaved, and strolled over to the tent holding the operations section. He listened to some of the arguments, but he didn't interfere. Later he walked over to visit General Montgomery. Montgomery was too busy to spend much time with the Supreme Commander, but the two leaders did have a brief talk.

At noon Eisenhower returned to the operations tent, where he watched the maps and listened to the news coming in. He held a press conference. For the remainder of the day he paced up and down receiving reports. After eating, he retired early to get a good night's sleep.

He didn't give a single order to anybody. That wasn't his job.

Eisenhower was lucky with his weather, Christine Nixon wasn't. She was Victorian Police Commissioner on Black Saturday, when strong winds and blazing heat in the middle of a drought stripped away many of our illusions about the vulnerability of our lifestyles.

She's been blamed far and wide for going off to dinner, and she's also got stick for getting a haircut and giving an interview to her biographer. It's been suggested that some of the criticism comes from the enemies she made in cleaning up the police force, and it's also been suggested that some of it is because she's a woman (well, Eisenhower's shaving doesn't seem to have been held against him, does it?).

We would suggest that a lot of it comes from not knowing what a manager's role is. And a lot of it can also be put down to our own fear.

Because we really, really do need a scapegoat here. If we can find someone to pin it all on then we can make the danger go away. If things had been done right, we tell ourselves, nobody need have died, no houses would have been lost, we could have gone on just as before and oh, how much we want to go on just as before.

The problem wasn't really that Nixon, or anyone else, made mistakes. After all, any system that relies on everybody involved doing exactly the right thing can be guaranteed to fail. We try to get round this by having systems in place that are capable of dealing with individual errors and unexpected strains.

As it turns out, the systems we had in place weren't capable of dealing with Black Saturday, and they buckled under the pressure. It was all startlingly new and unexpected, and now we know the horrors that are possible we can try to cobble together a system that works better next time they come along. The **Bushfires Royal Commission**, which is due to report in July, will help us make sense of it all.



Former Victorian Police chief Christine Nixon

In the meantime we can try and make the recovery and reconstruction of the devastated areas go as smoothly as possible, and there have not been many complaints about Christine Nixon over her role in that – in fact, exactly the opposite: she is a community builder par excellence.

But don't let's think that any system can handle the kind of carpet bombing we got from Mother Nature on Black Saturday without the chance of heavy losses. If we as a society decide that thousands of people are to live among the gumtrees at the end of bush tracks then when the climate changes and the bush dries out we are going to be at hellish risk. Things are changing. We've changed them. We can't go on as before. That's the issue.

I really, really wish we'd stop trying to pretend that we can make the problem go away by driving a scapegoat into the wilderness.

Here at Our Community we're all waiting with great interest for what Christine Nixon has to say at Communities in Control on June 1, where she'll be addressing the topic of **'What Really Matters'** as part of the Community Leadership Oration. For me she is the epitome of a great Australian leader.

We know it'll be worth hearing.

Denis Moriarty, Managing Director



2. Seven Years in the Making: COAG adopts Standard Chart of Accounts

In all the hubbub about the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) signing on to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's national health scheme (WA excepted) it would easily have been possible to overlook the paragraph down the end of the press release that said they'd agreed to additional reforms for the not-for-profit sector,

including an implementation plan and governance structure to develop a nationally consistent approach to fundraising regulation, and the adoption of a standard chart of accounts where possible by 1 July 2010. This will further reduce the regulatory burden and improve public confidence in the not-for-profit sector.

A nationally consistent approach to fundraising regulation is something devoutly to be wished, but it doesn't sound as if we're going to get it in the near future. These things take time – and heaven knows, the Standard Chart of Accounts has taken years and years, which is a very good reason to clap it as it finally breasts the tape.

Back in 2003 the Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies (CPNS) in the University of Queensland's School of Business wanted to write a book of guidelines for Treasurers of Incorporated Associations. They found themselves hampered by the fact that there was at the time no standard financial terminology.

As they looked into it more, they found there was a confusing lack of consistency in the accounting categories and terms required by government departments in their funding relationships with not-for-profit organisations.

This wasn't just a problem for guide writers, though; it was causing significant compliance costs for Australian community groups, especially those with more than one source of government funding, which had to produce their accounts in several different formats to comply with the demands of different agencies.

Unlike other OECD countries, Australia didn't not provide a set of specific national accounting terms for not-for-profit organisations – and Professor Myles McGregor-Lowndes and his team from CPNS girded up their loins and set to to create one and get it adopted by governments across Australia.

Versions of the chart have since been prepared for New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. And last weekend they finally pulled off the biggest coup of all – adoption by COAG. Three cheers to Prof. McGregor-Lowndes and all those involved in the project. You can read more about the project here.

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3. Revolutionising Grants: SmartyGrants rolls out

Here at Our Community we have been working on revolutionising the way grantmakers manage their grants.

There are many practices and processes that we believe can be improved, for the benefit of both grantseekers and grantmakers.

One of the lowest of the low lying fruit on the path to making grantmaking more timely and effective is to enable grant applications to complete the application form online.

While some funders now allow applicants to email their completed form, this is only marginally better than sending in hard copy applications. Even where a grantmaker does accept applications online, the systems can be so complex and confusing that they can leave grantseekers sometimes wishing for the good old days of pen and paper.

Now, for the first time, grantmakers can easily and cost effectively take this important step of accepting grant applications online.

SmartyGrants is a grants management system, developed by Our Community through the [Australian Institute of Grants Management](#). It enables grantmakers to manage the entire lifecycle of a grant; from the application stage, all the way through to acquittal.

SmartyGrants provides grantmakers with an easy and cost effective way to take their grant application process online. When Our Community sat down and began designing SmartyGrants we made sure to consult with a wide variety of grantmakers and grantseekers, with the aim of making a system that truly supports both sides of the funding equation.

For community groups there are many benefits to being able to apply online. SmartyGrants enables applicants to save their progress at any stage – this way you won't get to the last page, push submit and then face the horror of horrors: an error page and the loss of all the information you had painstakingly entered into the form. With SmartyGrants you can save your application at any stage, allowing progressive completion of your form.

SmartyGrants also gives you certainty that the grantmaker has received your application, because the system that you submit the application to is the same system that the grantmaker accesses to read your application. And it's free of any hang-ups about which browser or operating system you are using; applicants can use any computer with an internet connection to apply for a grant.

A number of visionary organisations have already jumped on the grantmaking revolution bandwagon with SmartyGrants, including: The Foundation for Young Australians, Brisbane City Council, Wingecarribee Shire Council, FebFast and the City of Port Phillip. They should be congratulated for their foresight.

More information on SmartyGrants is available at www.smartygrants.com.au

IN OTHER NEWS:

[Project Streamline](#), a US coalition of eight grantmakers that came together with the aim of reducing the "great waste of time and energy caused by inconsistent and inefficient reporting and application procedures", has just released a report on streamlining online applications and reporting.

The report highlights the need for online application systems to be Usable, Clear and Comprehensive.

Our Community wholeheartedly supports these findings and we would encourage all grantmakers who provide grants to community organisations to reflect on whether their online application procedures meet these criteria.

- [Download the Project Streamline report](#)



4. Online Donations: Save your cash, save your reputation

Earlier this month *The Age* newspaper [took a look at the Good Friday Appeal](#) conducted by the Royal Children's Hospital and suggested that “tens of thousands of dollars” donated to the appeal had gone to pay the fees for the online donations service it used.

The report pointed out that Everyday Hero took 6.5% of all donations collected through its site as an administration fee, amounting to more than \$22,000 in 2009.

Neither *The Age* nor Our Community are suggesting that Everyday Hero isn't earning its money legitimately. The company has said that its administration fee is reasonable considering the amount of work required to manage online donations for the appeal, and that may very well be absolutely true.

That doesn't mean, however, that it's a good deal for the Hospital, or for other community groups that may be looking at online fundraising.

Because there are other, much cheaper ways to run these things. And we don't want to blow our own trumpet, but we provide one of them.

There are certainly costs involved in providing the [GiveNow.com.au](#) online giving service, but Our Community pays almost all of them. We cross-subsidise the service (and delivery of this newsletter) from our other income streams.

[GiveNow.com.au](#) offers online donations free to any community group in Australia, regardless of size or purpose or tax status.

We do this in order to ensure that even the tiniest community groups have access to safe, secure online donations technology. We also believe that donations made in good faith to community organisations should not be subjected to hefty administrative fees.

The service is non-exclusive, non-binding and commission-free. This allows any community group with a bank account and the will to raise funds to take advantage of this important and rapidly growing mode of fundraising.

If the Royal Children's Hospital had used [GiveNow.com.au](#) to collect donations, we would have done it without charge (except for the credit card fees, which we've negotiated down to a very low rate – see [here](#)) and they'd have more than \$20,000 extra in the tin for the kids.

To be fair, the Hospital could also have done worse – there are more than half a dozen organisations out there doing this sort of thing, and a community group could find itself paying fees of almost 25% for online donations.

Leaving out of the equation for the moment the different services offered by the different websites, and any differences in effectiveness between the sites, the cost structures of these organisations may be summarised as follows:

	Transaction	% charge	Credit card fee	Hosting charge per month	Number of groups listed
eGive	0	0	1.8%	0	26
Everyday Hero	30c	6.5%	1.1%	\$33.00	686
GiveNow.com.au	0	0	1.33%	0	1,657
gofundraise	30c	6.6%	0.99%	\$22.00	283
KarmaCurrency	4.95	0	0	\$25.00	134
Mycause	0	6.5%	1.5%	0	224
onlinegiving	46c	5%	0.9	0	58
Paypal	30c	2.4%	0	0	?
Random Acts Of Kindness Online	30c	3.3%	0	\$119.80	1

The cost for using these services depends to some extent on the pattern of donations you expect. If, for example, you assume that in an average month your organisation receives 750 donations of \$33.33 each (total \$25,000) then the total cost breakdown would be as follows:

	Transaction	% charge	Credit card fee	Hosting charge per month	Total Cost	Total %
eGive	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$450.00	\$0.00	\$450.00	1.80%
Everyday Hero	\$225.00	\$1,625.00	\$275.00	\$33.00	\$2,158.00	8.63%
GiveNow.com.au	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$332.50	\$0.00	\$332.50	1.33%
gofundraise	\$225.00	\$1,650.00	\$247.50	\$22.00	\$2,144.50	8.58%
KarmaCurrency	\$3,712.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$25.00	\$3,737.50	14.95%
Mycause	\$0.00	\$1,625.00	\$375.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	8.00%
onlinegiving	\$345.00	\$1,250.00	\$225.00	\$0.00	\$1,820.00	7.28%
Paypal	\$225.00	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$825.00	3.30%
Random Acts Of Kindness Online	\$225.00	\$825.00	\$0.00	\$119.80	\$1,169.80	4.68%

By all means list your cause on one of the other sites if you want to – but make sure you’re conscious of what it’s costing your group. If you make the wrong decision you could stand to lose not only dollars, but critical public support.

To list your cause on GiveNow.com.au go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/receivedonations

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5. Giving News: Donations and inflation & why small is good

Community groups must encourage donors to increase their giving in line with inflation in order to receive the full benefit of their donations, according to a report from the UK’s National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF).

The two organisations recently released a report which investigated long-term charitable giving trends.

It found that community groups could be missing out on significant amounts of extra money if they did not remind donors to increase their giving each year.

This was particularly true for groups which had a large number of regular donors who gave via periodic direct debit, or through payroll giving.

The study showed that a £10 (\$A16.68) donation made in 2000 was worth £8.46 (\$A14.11) in real terms by 2008, losing 15% of its value. To counter the loss in value, groups which previously asked for a £10 donation should now be requesting one worth £11.50.

NCVO head of research Karl Wilding said it was vital charities got the most out of their donations.

A £10 donation made in 2000 was worth £8.46 in real terms by 2008

“Donations from individuals are an incredibly important source of income for the voluntary sector but in a period where giving is down because of the recession, it is even more important that charities get the most out of them,” he said.

“Prompting people to make small increases to regular donations could make a significant difference to their fundraising efforts.”

The report recommended groups take two actions:

1. Adjust their inflation expectations when planning ahead.
2. Start explaining to donors that their regular donation might not be worth as much as it was when they first began to help.

Small is good (mostly)

In other giving news, another UK report has found the public believe smaller charities are less wasteful with donors' contributions than larger ones.

Research group nfpSynergy surveyed 1000 people late last year, finding that 51% of respondents thought the statement “they are often wasteful in how they spend money” applied to charities with annual incomes of more than £10 million (\$A16.68 million).

Only 6% said the statement was true for charities with incomes of less than £1 million (\$A1.67 million) a year. The study also found:

- 65% of respondents believed small groups were good at understanding the needs of their beneficiaries; 35% said the same of large charities.
- 62% said they were just as likely to trust small charities as large ones. And 34% said they were more likely to trust small charities than large ones.
- 70% felt smaller charities were generally friendly organisations, compared to just 20% saying the same about larger groups.
- However 45% of respondents felt the statement “they are usually a bit amateurish in their approach” applied to smaller groups, while only 5% and 2% felt it applied to medium and larger groups respectively.

LINKS:

- [NCVO report](#)
- [nfpSynergy research](#)

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6. Talking Finances: Celebrating financial literacy



By Vanessa Nolan-Woods
Head of Community Markets, Westpac

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all 431 community treasurers who have been nominated for this year's Community Treasurers Awards.

The Westpac Social Sector Banking team is delighted that so many people were recognised by their peers for their amazing contributions, and that so many entries were of a high calibre.

We believe community treasurers are an integral part of our community. Many work long hours for no pay and bear a responsibility for the financial health of our community organisations.

We wanted to make sure that every single voluntary treasurer nominated for these awards was given the recognition and thanks they deserve, so Certificates of Appreciation have now been sent to each nominee.

Judging has taken place and the winners in each category – for small, medium and large community organisations – will be announced soon. We can't wait to share their stories.

Westpac Bank Managers around Australia were busy throughout the nomination period hosting morning teas in local branches to help spread the word about the awards. Eighty local branches took part, providing networking opportunities for the organisations which lie at the heart of each community.

At Westpac, celebrating the achievements of not-for-profit organisations is an essential part of what we do. We want to ensure that banking with Westpac for community groups goes beyond just bank accounts.

It's for this reason that we also offer sector-focused financial education, free guide books on understanding finances for both Treasurers and Board Members (you can download them [here](#)), free help sheets and financial management policies (see [here](#)), and support for the GiveNow.com.au commission-free online donations service (see [here](#)).

Next month we will also be launching Australia's very first **Social Sector Financial Literacy Week**, an event designed to help people working with community organisations make the most of their organisations' finances by learning more about essential financial concepts.

The event will see representatives of dozens of people around Australia take part in free financial management workshops that have been specially designed for not-for-profit organisations. It's another way we're working to ensure that we are supporting those of you who are working to build better communities.

To find out more about Social Sector Financial Literacy Week and how Westpac can help your organisation, go to www.communityfinancialcentre.com.au.

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7. Tailored training for community organisations hits a high note

Our Community has recently been involved in designing and delivering a series of highly successful fundraising training sessions in WA.

The sessions, which are being conducted for Regional Development Australia (RDA) and delivered by Training and Development Director Patrick Moriarty, have been described by RDA's Stacy Kowal as being received "exceptionally well".

"From all the feedback that I got from people, they were extremely happy. I got the feeling that it exceeded many people's expectations, which is awesome," Stacy said.

Through our training arm (the [Australian Institute of Community Practice and Governance](#)), Our Community delivers tailored training across Australia. Programs can be designed and delivered to meet your organisation's needs, and in places that suit you.

For example, we're about to undertake a suite of training in conjunction with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council that will take us to places including Brewarrina, Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Wagga Wagga and Batemans Bay.

Our sessions generally fall under one of eight key areas of community practice:

- Grants & Fundraising
- Boards, Governance & Leadership
- Finance, Insurance & Risk Management
- People Management
- Strategic Planning, Review & Revitalisation
- Communication & Promotion Via the Web
- Community Engagement & Advocacy
- Marketing & Media

All our training is delivered by experienced, engaging community sector practitioners, and has been road-tested in the field to guarantee its relevance and applicability at the coalface.

Individuals, organisations, councils or peak bodies are invited to get in touch and see what sort of training we can provide in a location convenient to you.

Download our tailored training brochure here – www.ourcommunity.com.au/tailoredtraining or contact Alan Matic – email alanm@ourcommunity.com.au or phone (03) 9320 6805.

Scheduled training

We also provide a range of scheduled training opportunities. Upcoming workshops and seminars include:

- Advanced Grant Writing Seminar - You've mastered the basics, now it's time to become a GRANTS MASTER (Perth, Brisbane: May)
- Board Member Bootcamp: Responsibilities, self-assessment, leadership - A practical workshop to help community Board members whip themselves into shape (Melbourne: May)
- Certificate IV in (Governance) - for Community Boards - accredited four-day training for community board/committee members and supporters (Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney: June)
- Community-Business Partnerships Bootcamp - A practical how-to workshop that will help your organisation find and keep the right partner (Brisbane, Melbourne: June)
- How to Develop and Implement Policies and Procedures - A practical workshop to help you build the foundations your organisation needs to run effectively (Brisbane: May)
- Intensive Community Fundraising Seminar 2010 - seminar for community groups (Brisbane: April)

Find out more about our tailored and scheduled training at www.ourcommunity.com.au/training

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8. It's official: sport is good for you

The NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal has held that Northern NSW Football Limited (NNFL), a non-profit organisation established for the object of promoting football, has a dominant purpose that is beneficial to the community.

On this basis, NNFL was found to be a "charity" entitled to certain payroll tax and stamp duty exemptions.

It's generally conceded that the law of charities in Australia is a shambles from top to bottom, and one of the most irritating problems is that a judge's decision about what counts as a charity in State law isn't necessarily applicable to what counts as a charity under Federal law, and vice versa. The Tribunal decision isn't binding on other states, or the ATO, or even on other NSW courts. Nonetheless, this is an important and well-argued decision, and any sporting organisation should be considering it closely.

The NSW Chief Commissioner of State Revenue had refused the group state tax exemptions on the basis that NNFL was not a "non-profit organisation *having as its sole or dominant purpose a charitable, benevolent, philanthropic or patriotic purpose*"; the main purpose of the NNFL was to promote soccer, and (based on current ATO rulings and prior case law) a recreational or sporting purpose wasn't a charitable one.

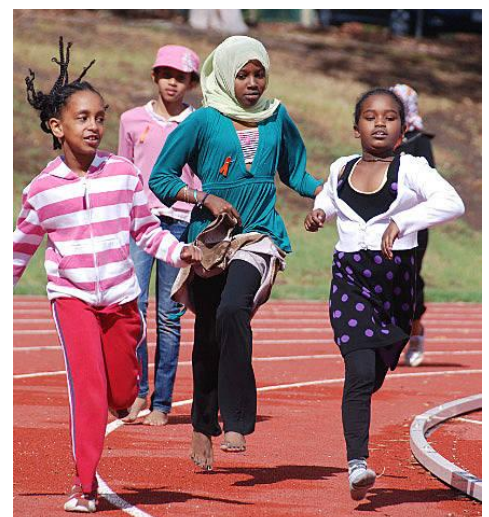


Photo by Mr. Yasseen Musa for The Eritrean Community in Australia ([Our Community PhotoBank](#))

NNFL appealed this decision, and won.

The Tribunal held that the NNFL's Objects, taken as a whole, described a dominant purpose beyond the mere encouragement of a sport:

They provide and promote football as an undertaking which benefits communities, the benefit being the improvement in the health and general wellbeing of participants, through education which encompasses education generally and specifically relating to football.

(That, by the way, is something for all organisations out there to bear in mind when drawing up your grant applications; look at your objects widely, not simply as an end in themselves. See [next item](#) for more on this.)

"A purpose that is beneficial to the community" falls within one of the "four heads" of charitable purposes – but generations of case law have emphasised that only certain kinds of benefit count.

The Tribunal has decided that now, in the 21st Century, we're entering a new generation.

It recognised a "clash of generational requirements for charitable, benevolent, patriotic or philanthropic undertakings". A previous decision in 1885 (sic) had held that "gifts for the encouragement of a mere sport will not be charitable". The Tribunal sensibly preferred a 1981 Canadian decision that held

- promotion of amateur athletic sports under controlled conditions promotes health and is akin to those cases which have decided that promotion of health is a charitable purpose;
- participation in organised competitive amateur sports is in itself educational, both in the sense of training in discipline and maintenance of a healthy body and further in respect of education resulting from interchange of people from different cultures;
- an organisation, the main object of which is the promotion of an amateur athletic sport which involves the pursuit of physical fitness, is prima facie an organisation beneficial to the community and may be classified as a charitable organisation.

The Tribunal has clearly decided to shake some of the dust out of 400 years of case law, and Our Community wishes them all the best.

The ATO may take more persuading – and the Australian Government is currently mulling over the findings of several reports on charities and tax (the [Henry Review](#) is due out – finally – any day now), and may (or may not) change the law anyway.

Still, any community group promoting sports or other recreational activities should consider whether their objects also promote health and education through the vehicle of encouraging sport or recreation, and should look around at federal and state taxes with this decision in mind.

LINK:

- [Northern NSW Football Limited v Chief Commissioner of State Revenue \[2009\] NSW ADT 113](#)

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9. Marketing Guru: Turning on the spin cycle

The socially aware people who work in and for community groups are generally not the type of people who appreciate "spin".

But there are ways that community groups can use some of the practices of spin doctors to their own advantage.

It's not about being dishonest; it's about presenting your organisation and your arguments in the best possible light, which can be useful when you're in the media or putting forward a case for funding.

American e-newsletter [Blue Avocado](#) recently highlighted how this can be done, pointing out that community groups are often all too quick to highlight less than impressive membership numbers.

"Unless they're really big (like a million paid members), we tend to talk about membership numbers too much, usually to people who are unimpressed by them," author Ellis Robinson said.

“You may have 2500 members and only you know how hard it was to get this many of your supporters to join. But the City Council or a foundation is unlikely to be awed by the number 2500, since they hear big numbers all the time.”

Instead, Robinson suggests, you should talk about how many people you *represent* – an African support agency might talk about the 10,000 new migrants whose interests it represents; an environmental organisation might talk about the 150,000 people who use the park each year.

Another example of smart spin comes from the UK, where autism activist Polly Tommey has told political leaders that 6 million voters could be swayed by positive commitments on autism.

While you may not agree with Tommey’s views, theories or methods of attracting attention to her campaign (see [here](#)), you can’t help but admire the way she has framed her argument.

Tommey’s contention that 6 million votes could be won was based on a “complicated calculation based on the number of people with autism across the country, and the number of family members, carers and teachers who she believes would vote for any party that pledged greater resources for the condition”, the *Guardian* newspaper reports.

Tommey says that autism affects one in 100 adults, “and there are an estimated 300,000 adults with a condition somewhere on the autistic spectrum”.

“I know of 14 people in my family alone that would vote for any leader who would seriously consider initiating a real impact plan for (my son) Billy,” Tommey was reported as saying.

The next time you’re writing a grant application or framing a letter for support, think about how you’re presenting your vital statistics.

Don’t lie, or obfuscate, or conceal – the last thing we want is for the community sector to compromise its credibility – but do think about what the numbers you use really *mean*. Let them tell the true story of what you do.

“Remember,” Robinson says, “your work doesn’t just benefit your members, it benefits your *community!*”

The Marketing Guru is an initiative of the [Marketing, Media and Post Centre](#), the online resource for community groups provided by Our Community and Australia Post. Send your questions to guru@ourcommunity.com.au.

“You may have 2500 members and only you know how hard it was to get this many of your supporters to join. But the City Council or a foundation is unlikely to be awed by the number 2500, since they hear big numbers all the time.”



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10. Community Classifieds

OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE (Sydney)

Philanthropy and social investment advisory firm [Greenstone Group](#) is seeking an organisation to share its office space in Warriewood, NSW.

Greenstone is looking for an organisation to occupy half a 58-square-metre open plan office, which can accommodate up to four desks. There are meeting tables available plus a secure parking spot and visitor parking in the building carpark.

The office is located at brand new premises Quattro Corporate at 4 Daydream Street, Warriewood (northern beaches location) and costs \$850/month plus GST (plus 50% rates-aircon/electricity and an additional \$35 per month if internet and IT server are required). For more information contact Sue Barros on (02) 9999 5882 or email to sue.barros@greenstone.com.au.

VOLUNTEERS AVAILABLE (Australia-wide)

Australian Volunteers International regularly has volunteers returning from placements overseas who are looking at ways to continue their involvement in community work in Australia.

Several returnees are undertaking studies in international development and are keen to stay connected with development issues on a local or international level.

If any organisations require volunteers with these interests/skills contact AVI's returned volunteer coordinator Renee Archer by emailing rarcher@australianvolunteers.com.

CREATING GRITTY MEDIA

In an increasingly media savvy world, enhancing your promotional material with quality video content is an immensely effective way to raise your profile.

Grit Media produces high quality media products, tailored to the community sector. The organisation specialises in promotion, educational content and event coverage.

With a long history in community media, Grit Media will give your organisation the public image needed to achieve your goals! For more info visit www.gritmedia.org.au or contact Naomi on (03) 9663 7158 or at director@gritmedia.org.au.



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11. Community Calendar: What's on in the community sector

Our Community's online **Community Calendar** features all of the nationally significant events focussed around a major community or advocacy/awareness issue in Australia. Some events taking place in the next month include:



- **Starlight Day**: 1 May



- **Jelly Baby Month**: 1-31 May



- **Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month**: 1-31 May



- **International Composting Awareness Week**: 3 May

Privacy
Awareness Week

- **Privacy Awareness Week**: 3-9 May



- **Australian Dance Week**: 3-9 May



- **International Day Against Homophobia**: 17 May



- **Enrol to Vote Week**: 17-12 May

RESPONSIBLE
GAMBLING
AWARENESS
WEEK
18-22 MAY.

- **Responsible Gambling Awareness Week**: 18-22 May



- **International Museum Day**: 18 May



- **National Palliative Care Week**: 24 May



- **National Sorry Day**: 26 May



- **Reconciliation Week**: 27 May – 3 June

More events, plus the full listing for each event, can be found at www.ourcommunity.com.au/calendar.

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» *Post Communities in
Control Conference Skills Day*

Sustainable Fundraising & Marketing in Hard Times

You can't rest your good works on any one fundraising source that may buckle under you in the bad times. The future of your organisation depends on predictability and sustainability.

Balance your strategies across six solid foundation posts – donations; grants; community-business partnerships; memberships; special events; and earned income – and get your marketing right, and you can ride out the quakes.

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12. Community wins with work-life balance

Community groups can improve productivity and staff loyalty by helping employees achieve a balance between work and other life commitments, two national award-winners have shown.

The Playgroup Association of Queensland and not-for-profit personal and home-care services provider, DASSI, have been recognised in the 2009-2010 National Work-Life Balance Awards.

Playgroup Queensland won the overall community sector award for offering flexibility options including:

- Eight weeks paid parental leave for either parent;
- Allowing staff to bring children into the workplace;
- Part-time work, flexible rosters, post-maternity leave options and working from home; and
- “The ability to negotiate any kind of flexibility, at any time.”

The organisation says employees appreciate the supportive work environment, and that the organisation itself has “benefited from substantial productivity gains”.

DASSI, a Victorian organisation, received a special commendation for initiatives it says help to attract and retain “outstanding staff”. DASSI allows employees to choose their shifts, and where this means a shift cannot be filled, the organisation pays to outsource the work. Other work/life balance initiatives at DASSI include:

- Allowing employees to purchase an extra four weeks of leave each year;
- Part-time employment and job sharing;
- Flexible hours; and
- Remote access for office staff.

The overall national winner of the awards, which are administered by the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), was Probuild Constructions.

Probuild, which has offices in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia, also offers flexible hours, rotational weekend work, maternity and paternity leave, study leave and emergency services leave.

DEEWR says offering family-friendly and flexible work arrangements can help attract employees and prevent staff from leaving to find employment in workplaces that do offer such arrangements. Other benefits flagged by DEEWR are:

- Reduced absenteeism and staff turnover;
- Improved productivity;
- Reduced stress levels and improved morale and commitment;
- Potential for improved occupational health and safety records; and
- Being better able to match peaks and troughs in workloads and staffing

For more information, including plenty of ideas, go to <http://tinyurl.com/WLBAwards>.

DO IT YOURSELF:

American e-newsletter *Blue Avocado* has provided a good example of a questionnaire supervisors might use to assess requests for flexible work arrangements. To see US not-for-profit Save the Bay’s “Alternative Work Arrangement Questionnaire for Supervisors,” go to <http://www.blueavocado.org/node/517>.

For more information on responsible business practices, visit the Australian Institute for Corporate Responsibility – a division of Our Community – at www.aicr.com.au.

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13. A Future Free-for-all: The role of the community sector in the British elections

The British have an election coming up next Thursday.

Startlingly, the outcome is up for grabs, with some polls having the Labour Party (that's with a 'u') coming in third in the popular vote – and still, thanks to the vagaries of first-past-the-post, forming government.

For us at *Our Community Matters*, the interesting thing is to see that all three parties are to a quite significant extent fighting over our ground.

While the headlines cover more newsy items like benefit cuts and nuclear deterrents, each party has also released a Civil Society Policy covering what it would do with the Third Sector once in government.



Cover of the Labour Manifesto 2010

- The **Conservatives** (who had until very recently confidently been expecting victory) have a big idea for this election – the big society. This apparently involves rolling back the state – or, as their leader calls it, “rolling forward society”. It centres on “little platoons” of civil society being able to take over local amenities such as parks and libraries, having greater control over planning, and holding the police to account through neighbourhood meetings. Cabinet Office budgets will fund the training of independent community organisers to help people set up and run neighbourhood groups in the UK’s poorest areas, and it will employ US-style “nudge” thinking (peer pressure) to create a nation of volunteers.

The Tories also propose to level the playing field for charities that deliver public services by allowing them to “earn a competitive return for providing public services”. Its financial vehicle to support social entrepreneurs is the Big Society bank funded by dormant bank accounts.

Most interestingly perhaps, the Tories talk (in a rather un-Thatcherite fashion) of developing a measure of wellbeing that encapsulates the social value of state action, a measure that if successful would be a fascinating breakthrough.

- **Labour**, of course, claims to be doing all the good bits of that already. The government has already implemented (or is now proposing) many ideas similar to those put forward by the Tories. Looking at outsourcing public services to charities and social enterprises, for example, they’ve already announced that a social investment bank, funded by dormant bank accounts, would help fund social enterprises to do just that. It also wants private investors to support social entrepreneurs to tackle social problems through social impact bonds.

Labour, too, acknowledges that it needs to create a level playing field for voluntary organisations competing for public sector contracts. To match their rival's National Citizens Service, Labour has its own plan for youth volunteering through a National Youth Community Service, and plans for community empowerment through mutually-owned football clubs, pubs and public services.

- The **Liberal Democrats**, the rising-like-a-rocket third party in the election, say they plan to make people free to tackle local problems through voluntary activity. They also want to see a greater role for third sector organisations in the delivery of health services and welfare.

More specifically, they would, if elected (still a very long shot indeed), introduce “easy giving accounts” at publicly-owned banks to allow people to operate charitable giving accounts, and reform the process of criminal record checking so that volunteers need only one record that is portable across different charities.

They'll change the way the national lottery is taxed to deliver more for good causes, and they also plan to raid dormant betting accounts to improve local sports facilities.

Whoever wins the election, expect the community sector's role in the delivery of public services to expand in the UK.

The interesting thing is that they're discussing these matters at all. In Australian elections the community sector is taken for granted, and nobody seems to think that policy in this area will change a single vote. Nobody bids for its favour, nobody seems to fear its displeasure.

The community sector employs more people than does agriculture, but gets a fraction of the attention. To quite a large extent, that's the sector's own fault. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, and we don't squeak enough.

That's one of the things that the Communities in Control Conference is trying to fix – come and join the movement: www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic2010.

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14. Legally Speaking: New award comes into play

Richard Thompson and Josh Strong from Wisewould Mahoney Lawyers provide information on the new Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award:

The *Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010* ("the Award") came into effect on January 1, 2010, and operates in conjunction with the statutory National Employment Standards ("NES") in establishing minimum employment standards for those employees covered.

Organisations employing staff pursuant to the Award need to become familiar with its provisions, as a number of rights and obligations will be affected.

The Award covers employees engaged in the following areas:

- a) crisis assistance and supported housing sector;
- b) social and community services sector;
- c) home care sector; and
- d) family day care scheme sector.

Employees are not covered by the Award if they are covered by another award which takes precedence, such as the *Aged Care Award 2010* and the *Nurses Award 2010* (clause 4.2 of the Award lists the awards that will take precedence). Employers who hold doubts about whether certain employees are covered may view the Classification Definitions at Schedule B of the Award.

The Award contains the standard model flexibility clause, which permits employers and employees to vary the application of Award provisions to meet their individual needs.

Work hours, leave loading and overtime rates may be varied, however employers will need to be able to demonstrate that the employee is adequately compensated for any changes and that the agreement passes the better off overall test (BOOT).

Individual flexibility agreements will be required to be in writing, and may be terminated by either party by giving four weeks notice (notice is not required if the parties agree to terminate the agreement).

Redundancy entitlements will apply where an employee's position is terminated because the employer no longer requires the job to be done, or has become insolvent or bankrupt. Redundancy shall be calculated in accordance with the scale in the NES. There is no entitlement to redundancy pay if the employee is offered suitable alternative employment.

Employees will not be entitled to redundancy pay if they were employed for less than 12 months, or if the business employed less than 15 employees immediately before the termination. There is no entitlement to redundancy pay in a sale of business, if the employee is offered a position with the new employer on substantially similar terms.

The Award will phase in new pay scales. In addition to the pay scales employers should be mindful of employee allowances (for example, allowances apply for first aid officers, stand-by, meals, overtime and travel). Any employers currently making over-award payments to their employees are not required to continue such payments at the same rate, although there may be a separate contractual obligation to do so.

Employers must ensure that a copy of the Award and NES are freely available to all employees. In the case of a dispute about the Award or the NES, the parties must first attempt to resolve the matter in the workplace. If this cannot be achieved the matter may then be referred to Fair Work Australia.

Penalties for a breach of the Award are up to \$6600 for an individual and \$33,000 for a corporation per breach, so it is vital that employers are compliant.

For any concerns about compliance with the Award, or any other workplace queries, please feel free to contact Richard Thompson or Josh Strong on (03) 9612 7306. There is no charge for an initial telephone consultation.

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15. Community Briefs: News from across the community sector

Nominate yourself, your group, or your project for a 2010 Kookaburra Award

Our Community and Westpac are undertaking a search to find Australia's Kookaburras – the loud and proud stirrers – the community groups, the people and the projects that changed our communities for the better.

The **2010 Kookaburra Awards** will offer prizes to individuals, groups and projects that really made a difference – that stretch people's vision of what's possible in Australia's society today.

Each winner will receive a total prize package valued at more than \$10,000, plus free tickets (including flights and accommodation for those outside Victoria) to attend Australia's best community conference – Communities in Control 2010. The winners will be announced at the conference in front of an audience of 1500 community groups, MPs and dignitaries.

If you know of people, groups and projects in your community that fit that description, make sure their names are put forward for a Kookaburra Award.

Entries close on May 12. Nominate now at www.ourcommunity.com.au/kookaburras.



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Trimming the rolls

Some 10 years ago Professor Mark Lyons estimated that there were 700,000 not-for-profit groups in Australia, and it's a figure that's been much quoted since (including by us).

Just this year, the Productivity Commission made its own count (with, in fact, the help of Professor Lyons, almost his last activity before his unfortunate death this year).

It concluded there were 600,000 such groups.

On the face of it, this seems a precipitous drop. One in seven groups have dropped off the charts; does this mean that Australians are losing their public spirit?

Luckily, no. The difference is due to a change in the definition.

Professor Lyons included in his count more than 100,000 bodies corporate – apartment owners taking care of their property, for example. On reflection, the Commission decided that while those organisations were certainly examples of non-governmental autonomous organisations (and thus part of the third sector) they really weren't not-for-profit or for the public good in the same sense that an environmental group or a dog's home were (and thus not part of the not-for-profit sector).

There are still elements of confusion, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics categories don't agree with the Australian Tax Office's list, and you have to ask at every point who's in and who's out – but for now, let's settle on estimating that the not-for-profit sector covers about 600,000 separate and distinct groups. Give or take. More or less.

National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week is almost upon us, a week where community groups are encouraged to celebrate the contribution volunteers make to their work.

Volunteers will be recognised around Australia from May 10 to 16.

This year's theme is 'Volunteering: Now, more than ever', which Volunteering Australia suggests can be used in recruitment campaigns – 'Now more than ever we need you' – or to thank volunteers for their efforts – 'Now more than ever we recognise and value our volunteers'.

The website also lists ideas for your celebrations:

- Hold a thank-you morning tea, an awards night or an information session
- Invite a speaker to talk about how they have been impacted by your organisation's volunteers
- Create a thank-you slide show, with photographs of volunteers in action
- Organise a thank-you card signed by the head of the organisation or all of the staff
- Personalise a certificate of appreciation (which can be downloaded as above)
- Take a group photo of all current volunteers and hang it somewhere where everyone will see it.

Five and a half million people or 34% of adults in Australia volunteer. About half of them are aged between 35 and 44.

Volunteering Australia says almost two thirds of volunteers become involved because someone has asked them (35%) or because they know someone else who is involved (29%).

[Click here](#) to download logos, posters and certificates from Volunteering Australia.



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Fashion Conscience

Every clothing item we buy goes through several stages along the supply chain. At each stage there are ethically questionable scenarios that may arise.

These issues are exacerbated by trend-driven, cheap fashion of poor quality that turns into landfill at the end of each season.

The latest edition of *GiveNow News* – Australia’s only free e-newsletter devoted entirely to giving – features a ‘Giving Bootcamp’ article on how we can give by changing the way we shop.

- [Click here](#) to read the article
- [Click here](#) to download the entire newsletter (1.25MB)
- [Click here](#) to become a subscriber (it’s free!)

The current edition also includes articles on giving for medical research, how to make a difference without giving a donation, the latest celebrity giving news and an Uncharitable Thoughts column on raffles (*“If you wouldn’t stump up that \$2 without getting a ticket, there must, at the margin, be some element of greed in it. You’re only entitled to the net amount of warm inner glow, not the gross.”*)

GiveNow News is the official newsletter of GiveNow.com.au (proudly supported by Westpac) and is dedicated to helping Australians give more, give smarter and give better. The newsletter is produced with the support of the Liberman Family Foundation.



New diversity mentoring program

The Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre (AILC) has announced dates for a new training opportunity – Introduction to Diversity Mentoring (Indigenous) 2010.

The three-day program is aimed at “Indigenous Australians who wish to further develop leadership knowledge, skills and networks; and non-Indigenous Australians who wish to work more effectively with Indigenous people within the workplace and/or Indigenous communities”.

Courses will be staged in every Australian State and Territory (except Tasmania) from next month through to the end of 2010.

[Click here](#) for more information, as well as a schedule of events.

What are your ICT needs?

Community groups across Australia are being urged to take part in a study on their information and communication technology (ICT) needs.

The study is being undertaken by recycling organisation Acre to help shape what products, services or resources the organisation should focus on developing for community organisations.

“As part of our GreenICT program we endeavour to provide (community groups) with access to a range of managed solutions at no cost,” Acre says.

The Acre survey should be completed by the most senior IT person, director or office manager at your organisation, assisted (when necessary) by other officers responsible for the information requested.

[Click here](#) to find out more and complete the survey.

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Great Grant: Petrol vouchers for volunteers

BP's Vouchers for Volunteers program is open again.

Volunteers who use a vehicle to undertake their volunteering activities could be eligible for free BP fuel offered under the program.

But you'll need to be quick – applications close at 5pm on May 2, 2010.

Find out more at http://talkstoppedlongago.com.au/v4v_home.html

To stay up to date with all the latest grant opportunities, sign up to receive the EasyGrants newsletter. Go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/easygrants

Primed for property purchase

Community groups in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria will be given a chance to build up the finances they need to purchase their own office space in a new initiative from Foresters Community Finance.

A Foresters subsidiary, Social Investment Australia, recently launched a Social Impact Property Fund which will invest in commercial property that houses the operations of a variety of community sector organisations.

The fund is aiming to provide investors with a 5.5% return, and community groups will have the opportunity to purchase the property on completion of a seven-year lease.

Social Investment Australia executive director Peter Aubort said SIA was created to provide sustainable futures for Australia's not-for-profit sector.

JBWere executive director Christopher Thorn said community groups would be provided with stable tenure in quality premises "that are easily accessible by communities in need".

"SIA is increasing asset ownership in the community sector, which in turn strengthens the social fabric in this country," Mr Thorn said.

Governance training in regional Victoria

VCOSS Clearinghouse and PILCHConnect are undertaking governance training for Victorian community organisations.

Seminars will be held from May to October in Ballarat, Morwell, Bairnsdale, Benalla, Beaufort, Mildura and Swan Hill.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Sharing facilities

The Victorian Government has backed 24 recommendations contained in a recent Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) report into the sharing of government and community facilities across the state.

The report confirmed that local councils and schools were the main providers of shared facilities. The VCEC report recommended:

- Plans over the coming two years to build up a better picture of shared facilities available around the state.
- That councils and the government work closely with schools and others with possible shared use facilities to better co-ordinate their use, and to try and simplify hire and/or licence agreements.
- That to facilitate better connection between users and suppliers of shared facilities and to facilitate access to information, the Department of Planning and Community Development develop and host a web-based shared facilities portal.

The original VCEC report is available here: <http://www.tinyurl.com.au/64s>. The government response is available here: <http://www.tinyurl.com.au/64t>.

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16. Community Sector Jobs & Board Vacancies

JOB VACANCY LISTINGS (Paid Positions)

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

New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
Administration Assistant - 20 hrs P/W	Wesley Mission	Details
Counsellor	Mission Australia	Details

Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
Multicultural Service Coordinator/ Multicultural Information and Training Officer	Carers Queensland	Details
Domestic Violence Counsellor	Indigenous Domestic & Family Violence Counselling Service	Details

Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
Management Team Leader - volunteer role	SkillShare, supported by Oxfam Australia	Details
Senior Social & Community Services Officer	Cystic Fibrosis Victoria Inc	Details
Executive Director	Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers (AIWCW)	Details
Administration and Project Support	Women's Health In the North (WHIN)	Details
General Manager	Brooker Consulting	Details
General Manager Community Services	Brooker Consulting	Details
Communications Coordinator	Brotherhood of St Laurence	Details

BOARD/COMMITTEE VACANCY LISTINGS (Volunteer Positions)

The following is a list of the most recent Board/Committee vacancies listed at Our Community. To view other board or Committee vacancies go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/boardmatch (This matching service is free)

New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
Treasurer, Secretary, General Board Member	enveco association	Details

Tasmania

Job Title	Organisation	
Treasurer	Greening Australia Tasmania Ltd	Details

Job Title	Organisation	
General Board Member	Ballarat District Nursing & Healthcare	Details
Treasurer	Irabina - Childhood Autism Services	Details
General Board Member, Ordinary Board Members	Outer East Employment Service	Details
General Board Member	Self Help Addiction Resource Centre	Details
General Board Member	Inner North Community Foundation	Details

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17. Fast Forward

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

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

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

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18. About Our Community

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise that provides advice and tools for Australia's 600,000 community groups and schools, and practical linkages between the community sector and the general public, business and government.

Our major offerings include:

1. www.ourcommunity.com.au: Australia's most useful website and publishing house, encompassing the nation's largest and most diverse membership base and 12 Knowledge Centres – accelerating the impact of Australia's 600,000 community organisations
2. GivNow.com.au: The practical place to explore all the different ways you can help the community: how to make a donation, how to get involved, how and where to join in and support your community.
3. [Australian Institute for Community Practice and Governance](#): Practical and accessible certificated training delivered locally through our training Institute
4. [Institute for Best Practice in Grants Management](#): The unique suite of grants management services for government
5. [Australian Institute for Corporate Responsibility](#): Cutting edge corporate responsibility resources for large, medium and small business and community organisations

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