



Edition 4, 2012 – Issued June 19, 2012

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1. CIC speakers bust myths, declare war on whinging, put community at the core

By Harrison Tippet

The tenth and final Communities in Control Conference came to a close on Tuesday May 29, after more than 1000 delegates took part in two days of listening, debating, networking, exchanging tips and strategies, and – perhaps most importantly – recharging.

The conference, an initiative of Our Community and CatholicCare, was one of the most successful yet, and a fitting way to say goodbye to a movement that has become a highlight of the year for hundreds of community sector workers across the country.

The speakers were top notch. They blew away myths, knocked down straw men, declared a war on whinging, implored us to help lift the tone of the national debate, and asked us to entertain the idea that some of us may need to give up a little bit of our own wealth and comfort in order to do what's right for the country, and the people within it.

The delegates were similarly thoughtful and engaged. As one delegate put it:

All of the delegates get so much out of coming together and, in a way, as innovative and forward-looking as it always is, Communities in Control also has its roots in the most ancient of human traditions – the need to gather and listen and speak and inspire each other and to connect.

You have been facilitating a new millennium type of corroboree, really, and I hope whatever shape it takes in the future, it continues to draw us together to celebrate our successes and strengthen our abilities to strive for better outcomes (as well as hear great thinkers, eat great food and laugh at rude jokes).

I think you all have done an amazing job over the last 10 years, please don't stop now!!!

We are thinking and reading and digesting all your feedback from the conference as we work out where we go next. Watch this space!

In the meantime, here's a summary of what each speaker had to say during the conference. If you want to read the full text, or listen to the audio, you can find transcripts and audio at www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic2012papers.



DR JAMES WHELAN,
Research Director, Public Services Program, Centre for Policy Development

Is Australia Ready for 'Big Society'?

Dr James Whelan took to the CIC podium to discuss the 'Big Society' changes that swept across the United Kingdom following the 2010 election of David Cameron.

Dr Whelan explained the ways in which David Cameron transformed British society in two short years using 'Big Society' ideas based on concepts described in a Phillip Blond book, *Red Tory: How the Left and Right Have Broken Britain*.

When the Cameron Government launched Big Society in Britain, a [news story from Number 10](#) said the program would "aim to create a climate that empowers local people and communities, building a big society that will 'take power away from politicians and give it to people'."

Dr Whelan showed that the Cameron Government was essentially asking the British people to look after each other, with the government stepping back from social services.

In Cameron's first budget, £81 billion was cut from public sector spending, with 710,000 public sector employees sacked over five years, Dr Whelan said. Volunteerism, in Big Society, had become a moral obligation, as volunteers were expected to replace public servants, and do the job for free.

Dr Whelan suggested both Australian political parties appeared to be edging towards the introduction of Big Society changes (and there's been more flesh added to the bones in recent weeks – see [Part 6](#)).

A recently released Centre for Policy Development study on Big Society, written by Dr Whelan and released just after he spoke at Communities in Control, can be downloaded [here](#), [click here](#) to read or listen to his speech at Communities in Control, and check out [Part 12](#) to have your say about Big Society.



**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR NATASHA CICA,
Director, Inglis Clark Centre for Civil Society, University of Tasmania**

I Was Only Following Orders: When to Speak Up, When to Pull Out, When to Shut Up

A/Prof. Natasha Cica used her speech at Communities in Control to discuss the ways we deal with the conflicting considerations that we face when working for change.

She explored the topic using the story of Olegas Truchanas, a Lithuanian émigré who was the subject of her first book, *Pedder Dreaming*.

Mr Truchanas escaped World War II and arrived in Tasmania in the late 1940s, befriending a group of local watercolour artists, who in the 1970s would try to save a glacial lake, Lake Pedder, from inundation by a hydroelectric scheme.

A/Prof. Cica said the group's (ultimately unsuccessful) efforts provided a sense that ordinary people could come together to do something about what they considered to be wrong.

"His and their remarkable legacy was to open a sense of possibility in people, in terms of dreaming, doing and democracy, in Tasmania and beyond," she said.

A/Prof. Cica said the biggest current issues on the Australian landscape were the treatment of children in detention centres and the treatment of Indigenous Australians.

She offered no answers, preferring for each individual to take the story of Olegas Truchanas and his fellow artists, and develop their own understanding of the issues.

"Yet, I will say, when we do stare that responsibility in the face, in a human sense, a connected sense, and an applied sense, I personally have found that the answers turn out to be remarkably clear."

[Click here](#) to read this speech.



**DR SAMANTHA THOMAS,
Senior Research Fellow, Monash University**

From The Bottom Up: Do Nothing About Us Without Us

Dr Samantha Thomas' keynote address explored the mistakes that are made when the knowledge and experience of affected communities and individuals are not included in health improvement initiatives.

Using two case studies, obesity and gambling, Dr Thomas suggested that focussing on individual behavioural changes could be damaging, and that trying to shame people did not lead to progress.

"Personal responsibility," Dr Thomas said, "are the two most important and yet damaging words in health discourse."

"They're used as an excuse for inaction," she said. "They create an assumption that everyone can control what they do, or how they interact, or the choices they can make."

Dr Thomas said harm minimisation and health promotion should be the focus of health improvement initiatives.

"At the moment, I think we have the skew slightly off. We're really, really focused on personal responsibility rather than social responsibility. And we're also really focused on downstream communication strategies or initiatives, rather than upstream," Dr Thomas said.

"Downstream is us telling communities what to do, (while) upstream (is) us telling governments how they need to reform and engage in practices to protect communities."

Dr Thomas said information strategies on obesity and gambling were usually centered on negative impacts, and suggested a more effective strategy would be to show the positive impacts of being fit, or *not* gambling.

“Stigmatising people just makes things worse,” she said.



GEORGE MEGALOGENIS,
Author, Journalist, Political Commentator, Blogger

The Australian Moment: What's Next?

George Megalogenis, one of Australia's most respected political commentators, joined Communities in Control to guide the conference through the thinking behind his new book, *The Australian Moment*.

He said he wanted to “talk up” the country.

Following what he described as “pretty mediocre” political leadership over the past few years, Mr Megalogenis warned that politicians would not be remembered in 20 years if they had no achievements to show for their time in power.

He introduced the idea of “national memory”, whereby a country, after 20 or 30 years, tends to forget the mistakes of the past and starts to repeat them. Australia was at the tipping point now in its national memory, he said, following the last recession in 1991.

Mr Megalogenis said we were starting to go soft as a country even before the onset of the Global Financial Crisis, citing a number of examples that he said showed we were moving towards greater support of the “haves” than the “have nots”:

- 2003/2004 was the first time on record in a federal budget that the totality of family payments exceeded payments to the disabled, the unemployed, the sick, and veterans and their beneficiaries.
- In 2004/2005, the Federal Government allocated more money “to parents sending their kids to private school”, for the first time on record, than to tertiary education.

Mr Megalogenis said the GFC interrupted this trend and made us think “big picture” again. But he warned that Australia needed to make sure it did not forget the mistakes of the past.

He said the current mining boom provided an opportunity for the country to “step up”, as we did during the gold mining boom of the 1850s and when we made an active national choice to build a bigger country following WWII.

“But there’s a serious job ahead of us so we can say to ourselves, in 2020 or 2030, that we are the equivalent of the growth spurt after the gold rush or after the post-war migration program,” he said.

[Click here](#) to read or listen to this speech.



MARGARET SIMONS,
Journalist, author, academic and YouCommNews founder

Taking on the Fourth Estate: Why the time is NOW for people-powered news

Journalism is a rapidly changing industry, with new media taking centre stage and pushing traditional mediums, particularly print, to the precipice of endangerment, Margaret Simons told the Communities in Control audience.

Ms Simons began her speech with the example of Andy Carvin, the USA National Public Radio journalist who covered the Arab Spring uprising as it happened through Twitter, using that platform to find news, verify news, and publish news.

“He did all this while he was sitting at his desk in the USA,” she said.

Ms Simons said big media outlets were struggling to make changes to the way they functioned in order to keep their audience, and therefore their advertisers (i.e. their revenue).

“It’s becoming clear that no matter what business model our mainstream media adopts, the future is going to be smaller and less profitable for big media companies, which means fewer journalists employed by the mainstream,” she said.

Ms Simons said the loss of big media outlets might seem like a blessing, but perhaps not when you examined what they had allowed journalists to do:

- Support quality journalism;
- Build communities of interest;
- Contribute to the free-flow of information;
- Allow scrutiny of the powerful;
- Lubricate democracy; and
- Allow practical expression of freedom of speech.

Ms Simons gave a view of the future of journalism if it were to become an industry controlled by anybody with a social media account: “A world in which everybody can publish is a world where nothing can be relied upon,” she said.



SCOTT RIDDLE,
Strategic Syndication Partnership Manager, Google

Technological Stewardship: Charting Your Course in an Increasingly Digital World

Scott Riddle joined Communities in Control to discuss the array of new tools available to community groups, and the best ways to use them.

We’re living in an increasingly digital world, Mr Riddle said, which was causing changes that could force organisations to sink or swim.

“That change is inevitably going to touch on every facet of your organisation, and in the process it’s going to throw up some major questions about the way you do things,” he said. “I personally believe that if those changes are well managed they offer massive positive opportunity.”

Mr Riddle outlined a number of developments for community organisations to note and understand, including:

- Changes to YouTube to allow long-form content that meant it was becoming a viable live broadcast medium;
- The creation of Google+ as a “unifying social layer” to bind together Google products and services, including the Google+ “Hangout”, which allows users to engage in multi-person live video chat;
- Crowdsourcing trends – for example, creation of new maps using Mapmaker;
- Big data: New tools for collecting and analysing massive data sets, allowing a huge number of potentially useful developments – for example, monitoring of flu trends (and prediction of outbreaks);
- New tools to allow greater visualisation of data and concepts – for instance, geographic representation through Google maps; or use of ‘Fusion Tables’ in Google Docs.
- Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) – a new breed of online classrooms, where “suddenly the expertise of the world’s greatest teachers isn’t locked away at fancy universities available to only the richest people in the world – it’s available instantly to everyone”;
- Cloud computing developments that allow you to reduce software costs, and obtain ready access to software from anywhere;
- Fundraising through “digital direct response” (allowing donors to instantly sign up, donate or volunteer – making people more likely to do so) and through “crowd funding” (as with crowd sourcing, above).

Mr Riddle finished with three simple suggestions for community groups to consider when responding to and navigating the new digital world:

1. Undertake real, long-term strategic planning;
2. Actively seek new talent and new ideas;
3. Embrace digital, but *only* when it adds value.

[Click here](#) to read or listen to this speech.



DAMIAN OGDEN,
**Founder & Executive Director, Campaign Action
& Obama Campaign Adviser**

*Generation Next: A new way forward for
community leadership*

Campaign Action Founder Damian Ogden told Communities in Control delegates that there were three important aspects to the creation of social change:

1. **Progressive public policy** – providing vision, direction and agenda
2. **Community organising** – Building a constituency that fights for change
3. **Grassroots electoral campaigning** – Determining who makes decisions, and who holds the decision-makers accountable.

He stressed the importance of leadership.

“I urge you to think proactively about running campaigns that build the base, empower communities, grow new leaders and give them the skills they need to do this independently in the future,” he said.

“Leaders are not born, they are groomed and mentored. Leadership skills can be learned, but self-appointed leaders are rarely the leaders that we want.”

In the lead up to Barack Obama’s 2009 election as President of the US, Mr Ogden joined as a campaign volunteer, working with another volunteer named Dwight.

He said Dwight’s story provided a good example of the value of grassroots political leadership.

Dwight was a 64-year old janitor who had never voted in an election but decided to join Obama’s campaign during the primaries. As the general election approached, he was managing more than 600 volunteers who were working together to win the important area of north-west Indiana (which they eventually did).

“Dwight was someone who was completely disengaged from the political process his entire life, but he became a real leader in that campaign. He was so central to that campaign, I don’t think that they would have won those two districts without Dwight,” Mr Ogden said.

Following the election, Dwight, a man who always had leadership potential, was elected to the Chicago City Council.

“We have many in our community like Dwight, and we need to identify them, we need to train them, we need to give them the skills as leaders, because they are people with real connections to their communities,” Mr Ogden said.

[Click here](#) to read or listen to this speech.

“Leaders are not born, they are groomed and mentored. Leadership skills can be learned, but self-appointed leaders are rarely the leaders that we want.”



Communities in Control is co-convened by Our Community and CatholicCare.

Transcripts and audio of the 2012 speeches are available free of charge at www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic .

Transcripts of all 10 years of past conferences are also available free from the website.

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2. Community champion Joan Kirner delivers landmark social justice oration

If you see an injustice in the world, ask yourself, “What am I going to do about it?”

That was the message from former Victorian Premier Joan Kirner as she delivered a landmark speech at the Communities in Control Conference in Moonee Ponds on May 29.

Ms Kirner, who is the Victorian Communities Ambassador, was chosen to deliver the speech named in her honour in recognition of the leading conference’s 10th and final year.

Ms Kirner told conference delegates that a society that broke the link between economic success and social justice was on the road to social division and economic disintegration.

“Let’s be clear: we can and we must afford social and economic justice in Australia,” she said, pointing out that Australia ranked second in the UN Human Development Index, and its residents had the highest median wealth in the world.

Ms Kirner said people committed to social justice needed to reject the false notion of “citizen choice” in the basic areas of education and health, saying those without the means did not have any real choice.

“Frankly, I believe the concept of choice is a load of rubbish as a basis for social justice,” she said.

Ms Kirner said the happiest, most productive countries in the world were those where there was the least gap between highest and lowest income earners.

“This is not about earnings or class envy. It is about ensuring the quality of life of all our people, in Australia and the world, is underpinned and sustained by shared wealth,” she said.

“Increasingly in Australia, as the Gonski Report demonstrated, we are creating a divided education (and health) system – public versus private.”

She said the country must invest “big bikkies” in its education system to ensure that no child’s educational opportunities were inhibited by their parents’ income or location.

Ms Kirner laid out the values that had formed the basis of her more than four decades of community work:

- **People matter;**
- **Women matter as much as men do;**
- **All people deserve to be treated with respect (and treating people with respect gains respect);**
- **People affected by decisions should be part of making them; and**
- **Equity before the law and in the distribution of resources underpins a successful, socially just society.**

She urged community activists to restate and recommit to their own values, and to plan their individual and collective campaigns to strengthen social justice in Australia.

“When individuals, communities, governments and business recognise and practise common humanity, we can build a productive and progressive nation which can achieve social justice and economic justice and environmental sustainability,” she said.

“Don’t give up hope when the going gets tough. Get together, get angry and get organised.”

Universal early childhood education, training and employment for all were the keys to social justice, Ms Kirner said.

“Insist on our collective responsibility to close the gap in income distribution and provision of services for all citizens – even if it hurts you personally a bit,” she said.



“Don’t give up hope when the going gets tough.

Get together, get angry and get organised.”

“Continue to build an Australian society which is free from violence and respects and enhances our common humanity and our common environment.

“You people here today, and your children, you are the future. You can ensure that Australia is a socially just nation.

“Our task as social justice advocates is to enhance humanity. Thank you for what you are already doing for our common humanity, and may you accept the challenge to keep doing it.”

A transcript, audio and video of Joan Kirner’s speech can be found at www.ourcommunity.com.au/joankirneroration

→ Joan Kirner receives the nation’s highest honour

Former Victorian Premier Joan Kirner received a Companion of the Order of Australia in the June 11 Queen’s Birthday Honours.

The award was made in recognition of Ms Kirner’s service to Parliament and to the community “through conservation initiatives, contributions to gender equality, the development of education and training programs and the pursuit of civil rights and social inclusion”.

The AC is the nation’s greatest civic honour, awarded for eminent achievement and merit of the highest degree in service to Australia or humanity at large.

Ms Kirner has fought for community, equality and social justice in a range of theatres over four decades.

The front-woman for a grassroots campaign for educational reform in the 1970s, Ms Kirner went on to join Parliament as a Labor Party MP, serving as Minister for Conservation, Forest and Lands (during which she introduced the seminal Landcare program), and Minister for Education (introducing a range of equity-based educational reforms), before becoming Victoria’s first female premier in 1990.

She retired from Parliament in 1994.

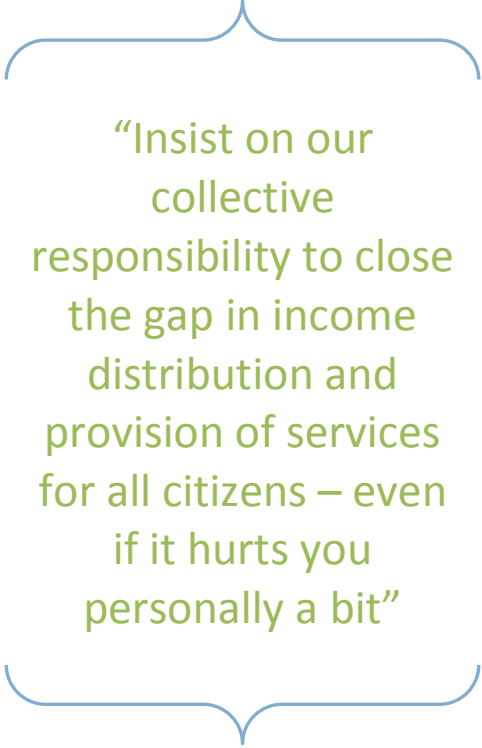
Before, during and after her Parliamentary career, Ms Kirner has been prominent in the nation-changing struggles for social inclusion, women’s equality, environmental protection, and community-driven community development.

Having played an integral role in the development of the social fabric of Australia, she remains an enduring community activist and champion for the forgotten.

Our Community Group Managing Director Denis Moriarty, who has worked with Ms Kirner in government, the private sector and the community sector for the past 30 years, described the former premier as a “progressive, decisive and courageous” leader.

“Joan is a passionate leader and mentor in women’s causes, in mobilising grassroots movements, environmental advocacy, education and, most importantly, empowering communities and community action for a fairer and just Australia,” he said.

Ms Kirner’s landmark speech on social justice, delivered at the Communities in Control Conference on May 29 in front of a 1000-strong crowd drawn from all over Australia, received a standing ovation.



“Insist on our collective responsibility to close the gap in income distribution and provision of services for all citizens – even if it hurts you personally a bit”

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3. Too few women join Australia's most prestigious club

Given all that Joan Kirner has done to advance women's equality in Australia, it's a shame that the same Queen's Birthday Honours list that brought her a well-overdue gong (see [Part 2](#)) also demonstrated what a long way we still have to go.

Ms Kirner was the only woman amongst the eight Australians awarded a Companion of the Order of Australia on June 11. In all, 540 awards were announced – 381 (or 70%) to men and just 159 to women.

Taking the 2012 awards as a whole – Australia Day and Queen's Birthday honours together – we find that the proportion of awards going to women has dropped sharply to its second-lowest level this century.

The trend line continues to slope downwards.

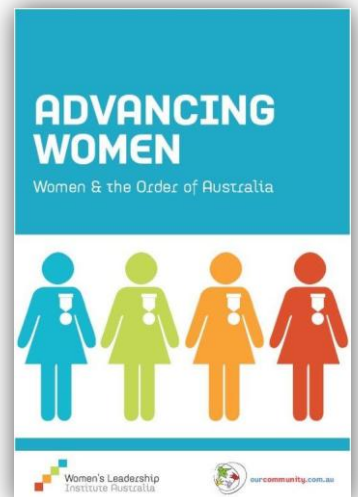


Your homework:

Look around you. Identify the women doing great things in your community.

Now put pen to paper and nominate them for an award.

If you need help, download the *Women and the Order of Australia* handbook at www.ourcommunity.com.au/honours



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4. PM announces central Victorian jobs project winner of social justice award

A central Victorian project that is working to give long-term unemployed people the confidence and skills they need to fill local jobs has won a landmark social justice award.

The inaugural [Joan Kirner Social Justice Award](#), a \$5000 award for grassroots community workers and projects, has been won by the Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal Team for their 'Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World' project.

The announcement was made via a video message from Prime Minister Julia Gillard at the Communities in Control Conference on May 29, 2012.

Maryborough has a disproportionately high rate of generational unemployment, the Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal Team says.

“Despite the availability of jobs locally, rates of unemployment and disengagement from education and training have remained amongst the highest in the state.

“Employers are desperate to fill positions. They cite instances of people leaving within days of starting a new job and cannot understand why unemployed people do not take up the available job opportunities.”

The Getting Ahead project is designed to help people who have experienced generational unemployment to understand the impacts of their disadvantage and learn the “rules and behaviours of the middle class”, or life skills, that are needed to get and keep jobs and training.

Ten months since the introduction of the project, seven of the 15 participants are employed and the remaining eight are in accredited education or training.

“Health and wellbeing are up, drug and alcohol use are down, and there have been vast improvements in relationships and civic engagement,” says Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal Place Manager Margaret Kent.

Project participant Kaz Huges told the Communities in Control conference that the program was confronting and challenging – “we didn’t always like some of the things we heard” – but gave participants the building blocks they needed to improve their personal and professional lives.

She said Getting Head helped her build up her confidence, recognise her strengths, and identify those areas where she needed more development. As a result, her family life had improved, and she had returned to study.

“It’s changed my life,” she said.

The Joan Kirner Social Justice Award recognises those people and groups who are emulating the lifetime work of former Victorian Premier Joan Kirner AM in bridging the gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” in Australia.

“The key factors to success in this award are respect, inclusion and collaboration,” the former Premier said. “As the Maryborough team has shown, social change initiatives work best where the process of change is owned by those affected by the change.”

The Joan Kirner Social Justice Award is an initiative of Our Community and the Trawalla Foundation, which is run by Our Community chair Carol Schwartz and her family.



L-R: Margaret Kent, Place Manager, Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal; Kaz Huges, Getting Ahead participant; Mark Johnston, CEO, Central Goldfields Shire; Matt Broad, Employment & Learning Coordinator, Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal; Denis Moriarty, Group Managing Director, Our Community; former Victorian Premier Joan Kirner; Fr Joe Caddy, CEO, CatholicCare, and Rosemarie Edwards, Getting Ahead participant.

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5. Last chance to contribute to the Communities in Control OurSay

The Our Community OurSay project is winding up soon (**tomorrow!**) – but you still have time to pose questions and vote yours and others to the top of the pile.

More than 100 questions have already been posed as part of the Communities in Control OurSay (<http://oursay.org/communities-in-control>), with more than 3000 votes lodged.

Set up to coincide with the recent Communities in Control Conference, this experiment with people-powered democracy is exploring the theme of government and community, inviting participants to pose questions to any and all levels of government on a communities in control topic of their choice.

The project opened a fortnight before the Communities in Control Conference, with the top three questions as at June 29 put to a live conference panel comprising “ex and exiting” politicians, former Deputy Premier of Victoria John Thwaites, former Federal Liberal MP for McEwen Fran Bailey, and outgoing Manningham City councillor Stephen Mayne.

The top three questions dealt with the topics of euthanasia, oral language deficiency, and nursing homes for young people.

Voting has continued since the conference, and the three top spots are still up for grabs. The top three questions at as close of voting on June 20 will be forwarded to the appropriate level of government for a response.

Join in! You have until close of business on June 20 to contribute your questions and votes! Go to

<http://oursay.org/communities-in-control>

Here’s a little of what the polities had to say on the May 29 panel ...

1. “Victorian Premier Ted Baillieu supports voluntary euthanasia. So do the overwhelming majority of Victorians and Australians across all states and territories. Why isn’t it law?”

John Thwaites told delegates that governments were hesitant to pass laws that could end people’s lives, saying he “never felt bound to follow the majority view”.

“The fact that the majority of people might, in a poll, say that they support euthanasia is not necessarily going to be the key factor for me. I’d weigh up the pros and cons for myself,” he said.

“I also think that parliamentarians, in making laws, are in a different position to people who are responding to a poll because on an issue like euthanasia, you’re not just giving a general view about whether in principle people ought to be able to choose to die with some form of assistance. It’s also about all the safeguards and risks around that.”

2. “One in 14 children in Australia is born without the capacity to gain, understand or use language. Without intervention they face a drastic future, so much so that 50% of youth offenders in this country have a serious oral language deficiency. Why, as a nation, are we not tackling the challenges that these children present us with?”

All three panellists were surprised by the figure quoted in the question, with Fran Bailey saying the problem most likely stemmed from a lack of early detection of oral and written skill problems.

“We’ve got to look at what programs we’ve got in school, how we test, how we find out whether our children are getting these crucial skills.”

3. “Let’s set up nursing homes for young people. Why isn’t the government helping to make this happen?”

Both John Thwaites and Stephen Mayne raised the possibility that such facilities could be established under the upcoming National Disability Insurance Scheme.

“Clearly, the Department of Health and Ageing out of Canberra ought to be providing an incentive, a higher day rate or bond discount or something, to get a small number of specialist accommodation,” Mr Mayne said.

“That hasn’t come out of the Department of Health and Ageing because their mandate is the aged. And so they don’t see it as an area where they should get involved.

“I’m very clear that a well-designed scheme nationally on disability will be the answer.

“It will cost money but it is totally unfair that we have great cover for people injured on the roads; that if you’re injured at work it’s pretty good as well; but if it’s something you’ve got when you were born or some other disability, then the cover is just not there.”

 [Click here](#) to read the full transcript of the May 29 OurSay panel, to download the audio or listen online.

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6. Charities Commission reveals timetable; Coalition reveals communities agenda

After a flurry of deferments and redefinitions in the area of not-for-profit reform, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Taskforce *Implementation Report* gives us a firmer idea of what's coming down the highway.

Continuing the analogy, the first thing to note is that the highway has sections that haven't been built yet, tollbooths controlled by other agencies, and population centres that want to detour the traffic past their own shopfronts.

Notwithstanding that, the Commission's coming on line on October 1.

We now know who the Commission is, too. Unsurprisingly, Susan Pascoe, the head of the ACNC Taskforce, is going on to head the Commission itself – a superb choice.

The ACNC team has been largely recruited – see the [website](#) – and includes such prominent sector figures as Murray Baird, whose practical legal opinions have featured frequently in Our Community's publications.

We also now know more about what the Commission is going to do, and what it isn't. Taking the latter first, the Implementation Report makes it clear that the Commission's not keen to take on either

- a) providing legal, accounting, governance or other professional advice, or
- b) acting as an advocate for the sector.

It'll link to existing free advice agencies, presumably the wealth of information provided here at Our Community, but its own information section will be devoted only to giving charities the information to manage their compliance obligations.

We now know, too, that the first effect of this entirely laudable effort to reduce overlap and red tape is unfortunately to increase overlap and red tape.

The ACNC will be working with other Commonwealth and State and Territory agencies to develop the report-once, use-often reporting framework.

In the meantime, charities will need to continue to meet their current state and territory financial reporting requirements. The Government is working closely with states and territories, the COAG NFP Reform Working Group, to minimise or reduce regulatory duplication.

From July 2013, that is, an incorporated association will have to make two annual reports instead of one.

We look forward to the day that the states adopt a "report once" regime and axe their individual reporting requirements, as we're sure does the ACNC.

Those difficulties, however, are (we hope) only temporary.

The deeper issues come to the fore when we consider exactly how the ACNC is going to combine the competing aims of reducing reporting requirements for not-for-profit organisations and increasing transparency for the general public.

The reporting required in 2013 will be fairly bare-bones – ABN, purposes, number of employees, number of volunteers, number of members, and what you're planning for the coming year.

By 2014, however, financial information is going to be called for. And not just the kind of financial information that will satisfy your auditor, either; financial information that enables the prospective donor to compare administration costs, costs of service provision and fundraising expenses between charities.

And that is a veritable 40-gallon drum of worms, as the Implementation Report made clear:

Submissions highlighted problems associated with collecting information about administration costs and costs of service provision due to the lack of common or consistent accounting definitions leading to invalid or misleading comparisons, and by activity reporting lacking the support of some accounting systems.

While [Standard Chart of Accounts] definitions exist for fundraising expenses, they vary between States and Territories — reflecting the differing information requirements of fundraising regulators. Treasury is

currently leading discussions with the States and Territories on charitable fundraising regulation reform.

The Implementation Report may even be understating the difficulties here. It's not simply a matter of aligning definitions across states; there are real issues about what is and isn't a fundraising expense. Money paid to an external fundraiser, yes, that's clear enough, but what about the percentage of time the CEO spends on schmoozing with potential donors? Does that count? What about including a will form in the Annual Report; should the cost of printing colour photographs be included?

Bearing in mind that the great Australian public has an entirely unrealistic understanding of what the actual costs of fundraising are, this has the potential for tears before bedtime.

If the ACNC doesn't manage to get something fairly ambitious under way in this area, though, there may be some disappointment in the sector. The idea was that the ACNC would increase public confidence in the NFP sector.

Members of the public develop relationships with charities as donors and beneficiaries. They want to know that charities operate according to their stated purpose, prudently manage their finances and have good governance arrangements.

“There are real issues about what is and isn't a fundraising expense. Money paid to an external fundraiser, yes, that's clear enough, but what about the percentage of time the CEO spends on schmoozing with potential donors?”

The public, though, can be quite suspicious of Australian charities. The public would have these doubts lessened if, and only if, it believes that there is a fierce regulator who will descend like a thunderbolt on all wrongdoers.

But this is not at all how the Commission sees its role. There is a certain amount of bluster in the report about “appropriate sanctions for serious or wilful non-compliance”, but it appears those sanctions aren't for organisations that don't operate to purpose, or stuff up their finances, or muck up their governance – they're sanctions for not filling out the appropriate forms.

This isn't just an evasion of responsibility, either. The theory behind it is that we don't actually want government to have too much in the way of coercive powers over the civil sector, and that any problems can be addressed through greater transparency – an organisation that is trading while insolvent will be shown up when their accounts are available online, an informed public will bring the force of public opinion against them, procuring reform without the Commission having to send an agent round.

Whether or not this theory is sound, it remains to be seen whether it will satisfy Australian tabloids in their continual search of a new occasion for moral indignation.

Coalition lauds 'cohesive' communities

The Commission is, of course, very much the product of the current Labor government, and we will have to wait and see how it might fare if the Coalition takes the reins.

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott is, of course, in favour of communities – his recent speech to the Pratt Foundation made that clear, though it was very short on specifics (its only actual commitment was to further centralise police jurisdictions).

Mr Abbott's speech is nonetheless significant (and potentially dangerous) for its apparent movement towards the UK theme of The Big Society – one where the state sheds as much as possible of its responsibilities to the voluntary sector (see Part 1 above). The term Big Society isn't used, but the rhetoric is very similar:

Government cannot live people's lives for them. It cannot abolish all the disappointments and failures that are part and parcel of even the best lives. If it tries to, it ends up diminishing people, not empowering them, because it takes away the element of striving that allows people to own their achievements. The risk, when government tackles problems that are best addressed in the community, is that people are denied the chance to achieve something for themselves.

The Coalition is much more interested in an empowered community than we are in an empowered government. We don't necessarily want government to do less for people but we certainly want people to have the capacity to do more for themselves because that's the way that stronger communities are built.

Meanwhile, the Coalition's vision of the role of the ACNC, as set out in a recent speech by Opposition spokesman Kevin Andrews, is much narrower.

... we will support a small Commission as an educative and training body. We will work with the sector to ensure that it represents the sector. We will work with the sector to transfer responsibility and governance of the Commission to the sector over the next few years.

Under the Coalition, Mr Andrews says, the independent charities commission will:

- Provide education and support services to registered charities;
- Provide information to assist with the process of registration for new charities and not-for-profit agencies;
- Act as a 'one-stop shop' for information on charitable organisations and agencies operating within Australia;
- Advocate for the rights of charities and not-for-profit agencies;
- Represent the interests of charities and not-for-profit agencies to government;
- Help facilitate the interaction between government and the charitable and not-for-profit sector;
- Undertake research and cross-sector evaluations on issues of concern to the sector; and
- Help foster innovation within the sector.

Other than that, regulation will be considerably simplified by taking your word for just about everything. Mr Andrews says the Coalition will:

- Simplify reporting requirements for governance arrangements, with registration as a company or unincorporated association sufficing as evidence of appropriate governance arrangements;
- Require all agencies to lodge a one-page 'annual governance return' by the chairperson of the board or governing body, indicating the agency is properly governed; and
- Work with the sector to ensure adequate and known whistleblower provisions are in place.

And he says the Coalition will "retain the current common law definition of charity, and maintain the Public Benefit Test".

This, of course, flies in the face of the findings of the 2001 Charities Definition Inquiry, the 2008 Henry Review, and the 2010 Productivity Commission report, all of which favoured a statutory solution.

If Mr Andrews' pledge to retain the common law definition does come to pass, it would be a slap in the face for a large chunk of the not-for-profit sector, leaving us with the same festering heap of English case law we have suffered under for the past 400 years.

In his speech, Mr Andrews quotes from Abraham Lincoln, Tocqueville, Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Plato, Aristotle, and Pericles on the virtues of civil society, a term he says he prefers to 'not-for-profits'.

Of rather more practical concern to Australian not-for-profits, however, is what precisely Mr Andrews (and Mr Abbott) mean by their fulsome praise of "the ability of citizens to take responsibility for their own community and society".

In the UK, the Big Society project has, in the context of a grinding recession, come to be seen as the cover for moving responsibilities from the state to the voluntary sector without any corresponding shift of funding.

It's going to be an interesting few years.

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7. Hazard Warning: Privacy Protection

In the last edition of *Our Community Matters*, we outlined some of the hazards of working in the modern world as a not-for-profit – and the challenge of maintaining adequate data security was among the biggest.

As we pointed out, new electronic media tools offer community groups enormous new capabilities, but also generate new threats.

As we reported, a number of recent examples show how things can go awry:

- a UK pregnancy advisory service was hacked by an anti-abortion campaigner, who threatened to reveal the personal details of women who had contacted the service seeking advice;
- a Scottish disability charity was sanctioned after two memory sticks containing personal details of around 100 individuals were stolen from an employee's home; and
- a glitch in the London Marathon website resulted in the details of up to 38,000 runners being revealed.

Now comes the news that Amnesty International UK's website has also come under attack, being infected with a Trojan malware that attempted to steal users' personal data. (The organisation said that user profiles were held on a separate website and had not been compromised.)

A new privacy fact sheet produce by the Australian Government could help provide some clues about what your organisation can do to protect the privacy of your clients, members and website users.

The fact sheet – *Ten Steps to Protect Other People's Personal Information* – was released by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner to coincide with Privacy Week.

Being sensible, honest and discreet are the keys to properly collecting and handling personal information, according to the new guide, which suggests that organisations:

- Only collect information you need, and make sure people know the information you collect. Ensure each piece of information is necessary for your group's work.
- Don't collect personal information about an individual just because you think that information may come in handy later.
- Tell people how you are going to handle the personal information you collect about them.
- Think before disclosing personal information – that includes gaining permission from people if you wish to disclose their personal information for a reason that is different from the reason you collected it.
- If people ask, give them access to the personal information you hold about them.
- Don't keep information you no longer need or that you no longer have to retain.

The fact sheet also includes some guidance on how organisations can keep people's personal information secure, suggesting you:

- Think about the adequacy of existing security measures and procedures;
- Train staff in privacy procedures;
- Ensure adequate IT security, such as installing firewalls, cookie removers and anti-virus scanners;
- Check that personal information has been removed from electronic devices before you sell or destroy them;
- Keep hard copy files in properly secured cabinets;
- Allow staff to access personal information on a "need to know" basis only; and
- Monitor your information handling practices to ensure they are secure.

[Click here](#) to download the fact sheet.

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8. The power, the passion, the struggles, the triumphs: OC award alumni update

Four recent stories from four very different community groups highlight some of the challenges and triumphs inherent in community sector work.

The common thread is that they are all past Our Community award winners.

► [Sisters Inside fights defunding decision](#)

Sisters Inside is a Queensland-based community group that won Our Community's inaugural Community Idol competition back in 2005.

The organisation advocates for the human rights of women in the criminal justice system, working to address the gaps in services available to them.

Now they're fighting for survival, with the new Queensland State Government refuses to provide ongoing funding.

"Criminalised women have the highest rate of sexual and physical abuse perpetrated against them in our community. Due to this horrendous abuse women turn to self medication with illegal drugs and/or alcohol," the organisation says.

"Sisters Inside reduces crime in our communities, breaking the cycle of imprisonment which saves the State Government and taxpayers money and keeps families together."

Sisters Inside have posted a position urging the government to reverse its decision – [click here](#) to read more, [here](#) to hear an ABC radio program on the issue, or [here](#) to visit the Sisters Inside website.



► [Project Respect seeks help in funding campaign](#)

2011 Kookaburra Award winner Project Respect is also fighting a government decision to discontinue funding.

The organisation, which works to fight against the trafficking of women and to stand up for the rights of women sex workers, says its only Victorian Government grant has ended and the recent State Budget has no mention of any more to come.

The Attorney General has not responded to requests to meet with the organisation to discuss future funding, the organisation says.

"This project grant paid for one outreach worker for 12 months, who, in this short space of time, worked with 20 women who had been trafficked into the sex industry," Project Respect says.

"The State Government is committed to law and order. The State Government is committed to addressing violence against women.

"Women who have been trafficked into the Victorian sex industry have suffered a gross violation of their fundamental human rights. Why is the Government refusing to support Project Respect to assist these women?"

The organisation is urging supporters to call or send an email or letter to a state local MP – [click here](#) to see the template, or [here](#) to learn more about the work of Project Respect.



► [Asylum Seeker Resource Centre demonstrates the power of Fundraising Rule Number One](#)

Our Community's Complete Community Fundraising Handbook makes very clear our Number One Rule of Fundraising:

1. **If you don't ask, the answer is always no.**
Rule Number One. Tattoo it to the back of your hand.

And the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, a 2010 Kookaburra Award winner, has recently provided a very stark demonstration of just how true that notion is.

At midday on Thursday, April 26, we received in our inbox an email featuring a video appeal fronted by former Prime Minister and ASRC patron Malcolm Fraser.



The email that accompanied the video image outlined

- **The problem** – The Federal Government’s move to release more asylum seekers into the community was a welcome step, the organisation said, but one that has created an upsurge in demand for ASRC services.
- **The answer** – ASRC had set up extra clinics and recruited “an army of new volunteers” to ensure no asylum seeker would be turned away, “but the reality is they need additional financial support”.

So over we went to GiveNow, which the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre uses to collect its donations, to see what effect the email was having. Guess what? The donations were rolling in.

Who's getting what today?		
12:06PM	\$100.00	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)
12:02PM	\$200.00	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)
12:02PM	\$25.00	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)
12:02PM	\$100.00	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)
12:01PM	\$100.00	Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)

We’ve said it before and we’ll say it again – **ask and ye shall receive**. It’s rule number one. Don’t forget it!

Oh, and don’t forget rule number three either – people don’t give to causes, people give to people. (*People give when someone they like and trust asks them.*) It helps to have a good contact list as well.

► [Change Media Project highlights refugee story](#)

Finally, a little something to put a smile on your dial.

Change Media, another 2010 Kookaburra Award winner, is an organisation that uses digital media to empower communities to “skill up” and share their stories across the globe.

A recent project the organisation undertook with refugees from Bhutan and several African countries resulted in “an absurdist parody of how refugees are screened for ‘appropriate English behaviour’.”

It's called 'How to Laugh in English' and we think you'll like it. [Click here](#), or the image below, to view the video.



This project just goes to show – even when you're dealing with a very serious subject, laughter's often the best medicine.

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9. Equal Pay: the devil in the details

Fair Work Australia has awarded a landmark pay rise to community workers. Now all you have to do is get it.

The Federal Government has launched an [explanatory web page](#) about the Government's approach to "paying its share", which is that it will compensate the not-for-profit organisations it funds; or its share, where an organisation is co-funded by state and federal agencies.

The feds have allocated \$2.1 billion to cover their share, so now it's over to the states.

Queensland already moved to equal pay, and then some, and isn't fussed.

Western Australia didn't agree to come under Fair Work Australia, and has two industrial systems, so the situation there is confused.

The NSW Government seems to be hoping to delay implementation in that state by [six years](#) on the grounds that workers there are paid more than in other states and should wait for the other states to catch up before moving on (and there's a new round of [demonstrations](#) from workers who want their jam rather closer to today).

Meanwhile, Tasmania has allocated some \$3 million in this year's budget to compensate some 140,000 community sector workers (and to save you getting out your calculator, that works out to \$21 per head).

Issues of principle do seem to be taking a back seat.

"Affordability cannot be used an excuse to delay sorting pay inequalities" says Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner Dr Judy McGregor.

"There are legal obligations relating to pay equality and for far too long we have exploited the emotional goodwill of thousands of workers, predominantly women. Inaction means we're condoning a fundamental breach of human rights. We cannot afford to ignore this clear injustice for a large group of low paid but much needed workers....."

The Commission's inquiry recommends a stepped approach to implement fairness on pay rates over three years.... the costs of pay parity would be offset by savings in recruitment costs given the current high turnover of carers.

Three years? That's not so bad. Unfortunately, that's also [New Zealand](#), where a similar push is underway. Over this side of the pond you'll just have to wait.

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10. Hot New Diet Tip: How to live longer and be healthier

Pop Quiz: I smoke, I have high blood pressure, and my diet gives me high cholesterol. What would improve my health more: giving up smoking, fatty foods, and salt, or changing jobs?

Well, research has found that job classification is a better predictor of cardiovascular death than cholesterol level, blood pressure and smoking *combined*.

An English study found that professional workers lived on average 78.5 years, skilled non-manual workers 76 years, and unskilled manual workers 71 years. For better or for worse, most of our health doesn't depend on what we do. It depends on the society around us, and where we stand within it.

Australia today is a pretty unequal society, and that shows up in our health. At the top of the scale, among the people with the most advantages, only 10% of us report having poor health; for those at the bottom, the most disadvantaged, it's 30%.

Given that ill-health costs a lot, that's expensive. Just how expensive is shown in a new study from Catholic Health Australia.

Catholic Health Australia found that if the health gaps between the most and least disadvantaged groups of Australians of working age were closed, and the World Health Organisation's recommendations were adopted within Australia, we would see the following health and economic improvements:

- 400,000 additional disadvantaged Australians aged 25 to 64 years would be in "good" health;
- 500,000 Australians could avoid suffering a chronic illness;
- 170,000 extra Australians could enter the workforce, generating \$8 billion in extra earnings from wages and salaries;
- Annual savings of \$4 billion in government welfare support payments could be made;
- 60,000 fewer people would need to be admitted to hospital annually, resulting in more than 500,000 fewer hospital admissions, with savings of \$2.3 billion in hospital expenditure;
- 5.5 million fewer Medicare services would be needed each year, resulting in annual savings of \$273 million;
- 5.3 million fewer Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme scripts would be filled each year, resulting in annual savings of \$184.5 million each year.

And, of course, getting a healthier population would be worth having even if it wasn't so financially advantageous. Social justice helps everybody. Paging Joan Kirner!

Or perhaps Bill Shorten, who's currently plugging a new scheme for social impact investing in disadvantaged communities.

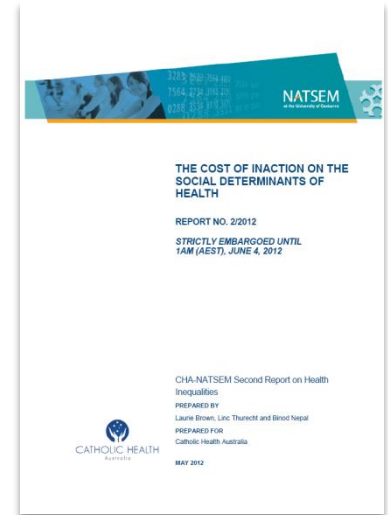
Mr Shorten has launched two reports by Dr Ingrid Burkett – *Place-based Impact Investment in Australia* (a literature review) and *Building Blocks for Action*, a sales pitch that says:

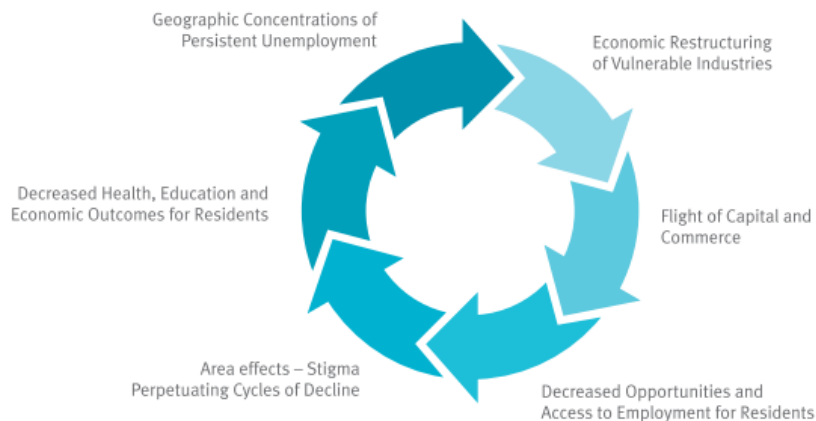
Place-based Impact Investment approaches bring an investment lens to addressing community decline and under-investment in Australia. These approaches seek to reverse the cycle of underinvestment and foster economic renewal in those communities that are at risk of, or already in decline, distress or disadvantage, and in so doing prevent further decline and restore economic vitality.

The reports were commissioned by the DEWR Social Innovation Group, the National Australia Bank, Mission Australia, and JB Were as 'conversation starters' for Australian impact investors and their supporters.

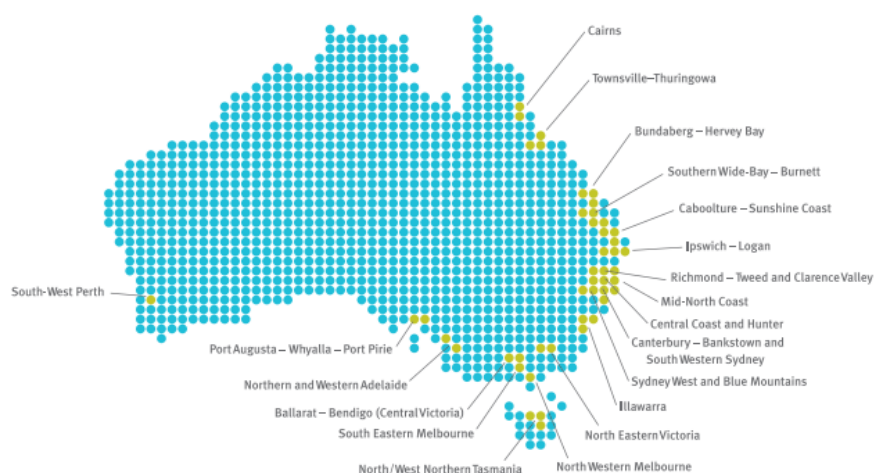
The theory is that you can in fact eat your cake and have it – do good **and** make money.

The report says that disadvantaged communities in a death spiral:



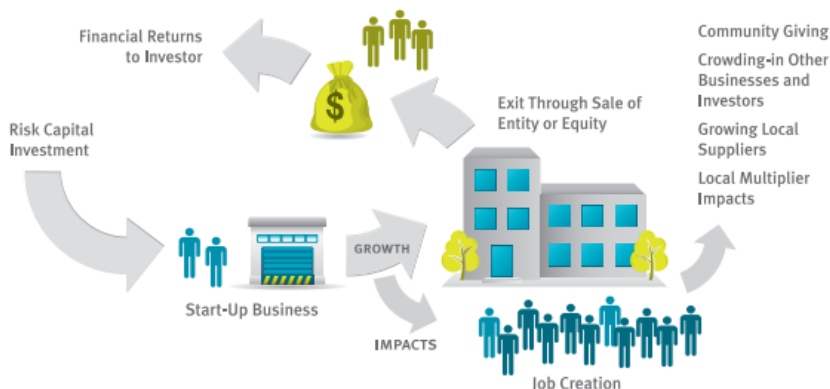


(which are, if you're curious, to be found here):



can be salvaged by social investing –

INVESTING IN START-UP BUSINESSES IN TARGET AREAS



– and you can't argue with graphics like that.

Finally, if you have five minutes to spare, it's well worth reading *Moneyball* author Michael Lewis' recent speech to the graduating class at Princeton University.

Lewis says: "Don't be deceived by life's outcomes. Life's outcomes, while not entirely random, have a huge amount of luck baked into them. Above all, recognise that if you have had success, you have also had luck — and with luck comes obligation. You owe a debt, and not just to your Gods. You owe a debt to the unlucky."

You can read the speech [here](#).

11. Stop the Presses! OC Training Calendar released today

Our Community's brand new training calendar is now online. Upcoming opportunities include:

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

Location	Dates
Melbourne	27 July
Sydney	27 July
Perth	30 July
Brisbane	30 July
Melbourne	17 September
Sydney	17 September
Perth	21 September
Brisbane	21 September
Inverell	24 September
Byron Bay	26 September
Melbourne	23 November
Sydney	23 November
Perth	26 November
Brisbane	26 November

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

Location	Dates
Melbourne	27 July
Sydney	27 July
Perth	30 July
Brisbane	30 July
Melbourne	17 September
Sydney	17 September
Perth	21 September
Brisbane	21 September
Inverell	24 September
Byron Bay	26 September
Melbourne	23 November

Sydney	23 November
Perth	26 November
Brisbane	26 November

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

Location	Dates
Canberra	22 June
Melbourne	10 August
Sydney	10 August
Perth	17 August
Brisbane	17 August
Melbourne	3 December
Sydney	3 December
Perth	7 December
Brisbane	7 December

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

Location	Dates
Melbourne	20 August
Sydney	20 August
Perth	24 August
Brisbane	24 August
Melbourne	15 October
Sydney	15 October
Perth	19 October
<u>Brisbane</u>	<u>19 October</u>

All scheduled Our Community training opportunities can be viewed at www.ourcommunity.com.au/scheduledtraining.

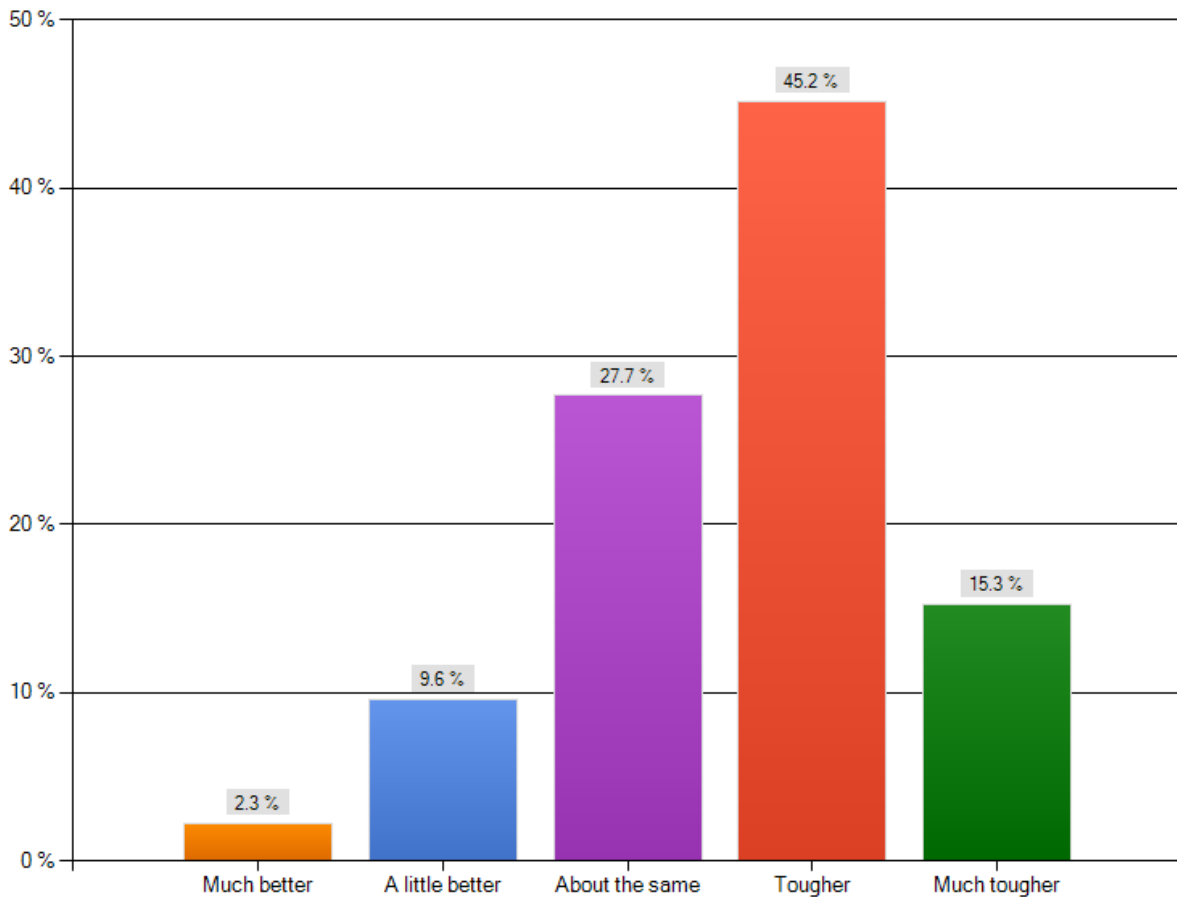
We also offer tailored training on a topic of your choice at a location of your choice – go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/tailoredtraining or email or call Alan Matic on alamn@ourcommunity.com.au or (03) 9320 6805.

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12. Our Community Poll reveals tough fundraising climate

Last month's Our Community poll asked for your views on the current fundraising climate – and, it seems, things are not looking so bright.

What's the climate for fundraising/donations like for your organisation, when compared with the same time last year?



The next edition of our *Raising Funds* newsletter will provide some tips for fundraising in a tough climate.

Our latest poll seeks to gain your views on the possibility of a rather big change in store for the Australian community sector.

In his speech at the 2012 Communities in Control Conference (see [Part 1](#)), Dr James Whelan told us that ready or not, the UK's "Big Society" may well be heading Australia's way.

What do you think about "Big Society"?

- A good thing** – government should get out of the way and let us get on with things
- A bad thing** – we need government intervention to create a just society
- Could be good; could be bad** – depends how it's implemented
- What's "Big Society"??**

Take the poll and view past results at www.ourcommunity.com.au/poll.

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13. Volunteering updates from Australia and beyond

Work as a volunteer? Work with volunteers? There's a lot of volunteering news about that you need to be on top of. Here's a snapshot.

Volunteering Australia on the move

Volunteering Australia (VA) will shut the doors of its Melbourne office at the end of this month and shift its headquarters to Canberra from the start of July.

In a release last month confirming the move, VA board president Paul Lynch said the organisation felt it could better represent the interests of volunteers by having a strong presence in Canberra.

"Volunteering Australia will be seeking to strengthen its capacity to represent the volunteering community through reform of its current governance structures and has determined that the organisation will be better placed to do this based in Canberra," he said.

The move has seen all seven current staff members, including CEO Cary Pedicini, leave VA. Mr Lynch paid tribute to Mr Pedicini and other staff members, and thanked them for their work.

VA said the move would not impact on service delivery – *including support for National Volunteer Week and GoVolunteer matching service.*

New GoVolunteer website close to launch

As Volunteering Australia (VA) shifts its headquarters to Canberra, it is also preparing for the launch of a new GoVolunteer website.

The revamped website has been rebuilt with the help of Seek and the Boston Consulting Group.

Volunteer management system VIKTOR Online is at the heart of the new site, promising enhanced matching of volunteers to jobs. The site has also been redesigned in order to improve the experience for volunteers and volunteer-involving groups.

In another change announced just this week, Volunteering WA is to take over responsibility for the administration and support of GoVolunteer. It is hoped this will improve service delivery for site users.

VA has urged groups that currently use the site to ensure their listings are up to date and that organisational details are accurate, with the launch expected to create an increase in site traffic.

For more information, contact GoVolunteer by email on: govolunteer@govolunteer.com.au.

State of Volunteering report released

Organisations must continue to meet the changing expectations of volunteers if they are to successfully attract them, according to the 2012 *State of Volunteering in Australia* report.

The Volunteering Australia report says volunteering opportunities need to evolve to meet community demands.

VA says Australia has a strong foundation for volunteering but must continue to meet the changing needs of the community, taking in non-traditional methods of volunteering such as work-place based volunteering, episodic volunteering and virtual volunteering.

[Click here](#) to download the report.

Seven key points in new UK volunteer code of practice

Volunteering England and the Association of British Insurers have released a new code of practice for volunteers.

The code aims to provide volunteers with guidance on staying safe, as well as on when they should ask for advice. Its seven tips for volunteers are:

- Take care in whatever you do.
- Think about your safety and the safety of others around you.
- Involve other people.
- Ask for help and information.
- Be clear about what you are and aren't responsible for.
- Check your existing insurance policies to see what you are covered for.
- If you are volunteering for an organisation you are probably covered by their insurance, though you can ask the organisation to make sure.

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14. Fancy working in your PJ's? Join us in National Telework Week

Are you sick of driving to and from work during peak hour, sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic?

Or maybe you just don't like the feeling of numb fingers as you wait for public transport during winter?

The Australian Government doesn't like it either.

Between November 12 and 16 this year, the government is holding National Telework Week, an event designed to promote some of the benefits of the national broadband network (NBN) businesses by encouraging not-for-profit organisations and government agencies to allow staff to work from home.

The government says telework has many benefits, saying it can:

- Improve workforce participation opportunities;
- Boost enterprise productivity;
- Reduce urban congestion on roads and public transport, especially at peak times;
- Reduce air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and fuel consumption associated with commuting;
- Improve the economic and cultural vitality of local areas as the workforce decentralises; and
- Provide time and cost savings for employees.

The Government wants to double telework rates to at least 12%.

“By embracing telework, organisations can free up their employees to work away from the office and with more flexible arrangements. Work is what you do, not where you do it,” said Minister for Broadband Stephen Conroy.

“The NBN allows employees to work in high-definition interactive environments from wherever they are, be it at home or elsewhere. This increases workplace productivity and can reduce the need for long daily commutes to the office.

“This will make a big difference to people's work-life balance.”

Our Community has signed up as a Telework Week partner – from November 12-16, we'll be encouraging staff to work remotely, where that works for the organisation and is convenient for them. (In fact, we do this all the time!)

For more information about Telework Week, visit <http://www.nbn.gov.au/nbn-benefits/telework/>.



The view from the home office of one lucky Our Community staffer

15. Social Media Update: stats, updates and tools

Facebook releases guide to 'Pages'

King of the social media mountain Facebook has released a guide for not-for-profit organisations and causes to make the most of their Facebook Pages.

The *Building your presence with Facebook Pages: A guide for causes and nonprofits* manual is “designed to help not-for-profits ... tell their stories and build deep, lasting connections with their audience.”

The guide provides information on tips on how to set up an engaging Facebook page, how to grow your audience, and how to measure results.

In the section on growing your audience, for example, the guide suggests a three-part strategy:

- **“Start with who you know.”** The guide recommends you suggest your page to your existing community to kick-start your ‘likes.’
- **“Leverage your existing assets.”** Add links to your existing online and offline presence (through emails, websites, post outs, etc.)
- **“Cross promote to reach more people.”** Use other organisations to build mutually beneficial partnerships where you can advertise one another to your existing audiences, thus ‘sharing’ your community.

The guide also provides Facebook’s “top five hints” to developing publishing strategies and building dialogues. A full copy of the guide can be accessed [here](#) (PDF, 1.5mb).

Keeping on top of Facebook changes

Facebook is one of those websites that seems to change every other week.

In line with that trend, Facebook Pages have undergone a few changes in recent months, as outlined in [this article](#).

If you’re using Facebook to keep member and friends abreast of your community organisation’s activities, make sure you’re on top of the developments.

Social media statistics Australia

Socialmedianews.com.au provides a monthly update to their collected social media statistics for Australia.

According to the latest (May) results, major movers include the relative newcomer **Pinterest**, a content-sharing service that allows users to “pin” images and videos to their own virtual “pinboard”, and **Instagram**, the photo-sharing app recently acquired by Facebook for \$1 billion. For the full statistics report, [click here](#).

Boggled by social media? Get the picture

Business consultant network Zintro has stitched together research from a bunch of sources (Twitter, Facebook, *Mashable* and more) to produce an infographic to help individuals develop their social strategies.

The infographic is just as useful for not-for-profits and other organisations, and [can be accessed here](#).



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16. 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:

[Red Nose Day: 29 June](#)

red nose day

Red Nose Day is the national fundraising event day for SIDS and Kids held throughout the month of June. Red Nose Day provides critical funding for a 24-hour bereavement support service, community education to reduce incidents of SIDS and fatal sleeping accidents, and research into areas such as SIDS and stillbirth. To date it is estimated that SIDS and Kids has saved the lives of more than 6500 babies across Australia.

[NAIDOC Week: 2-8 July](#)



NAIDOC celebrations are held around Australia in the first full week in July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. NAIDOC originally stood for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee'. Its acronym has become the name of the week itself. The week is celebrated not just in the Indigenous community, but also in government agencies, schools, local councils and workplaces.

[Diabetes Awareness Week: 8-14 July](#)



Each year Diabetes Australia celebrates National Diabetes Week to raise awareness about diabetes in Australia. The campaign aims to educate Australia of the risk factors for type 2 diabetes and how type 2 can be prevented.

[National Farm Safety Week: 16-21 July](#)



National Farm Safety Week aims to raise awareness of farm safety issues in rural communities across Australia.

[Fragile X Awareness Day: 22 July](#)



Fragile X Awareness Day is held on July 22 internationally. It is held to raise awareness of Fragile X syndrome, the most common cause of inherited intellectual disability.

[Stress Down Day: 27 July](#)



Stress Down Day is a fundraising event to help cover the cost of running Lifeline's 24-hour telephone counselling line – 13 11 14. Workplaces participate by enjoying a day of stress-reducing activities, including wearing casual dress to work, in exchange for a donation to the cause.

For more events, go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/calendar

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17. NDIS – hostage to fortune

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is now out past the stable door, and its first elements – a billion dollar's worth – are due to hit the streets from the middle of next year.

In 2013, 10,000 people; by 2014, 20,000 people; and then up and up.

Unless, of course, the Coalition wins the next election and decides it's time for sacrifices all round – a point one imagines the current government wishes people to have at the forefront of their minds over this next year.

If you want to see it all happen, there's a cheerleading website at <http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/home/> where you can sign up to show your support and send letters to your MPs.

The different states are creaking into action to be ready for the big day.

The Victorian Government, for example, is drawing up a new state disability plan; your feedback is sought.

The Queensland Government is complaining about the funding, saying that the scheme gives “the most vulnerable people in our community false hope and expectation”.

South Australia, to its credit, has actually offered a small amount of its own money.

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18. Community Sector Briefs

New project aims to reveal the size, value, composition and importance of the community sector

After the Productivity Commission's 2010 report on *The Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector* you'd think that that area had been more or less covered, and you might wonder why Mark Butler, Minister for Social Inclusion, and Julie Collins, Minister for Community Services, would be putting out a new media release on the topic.

The Productivity Commission, however, didn't do any research of its own, and the new initiative the ministers are reporting on will involve the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) looking for new hard data in an area where there's very little up-to-date hard data at all (the latest figures currently available date back to 2006-07).

Ministers Butler and Collins said the ABS Satellite Account for the 2012-13 financial year would provide “an updated picture of the size, value, composition and economic importance of the not-for-profit sector”.

They said the \$1.7 million project would help support the Government's community sector reform agenda – the most significant in Australia's history.

“It's important we have the latest information so we can work with our partners in the sector to deliver the best services possible for Australians most in need,” Ms Collins said.

Fulbright scholarship

An Origin Foundation-sponsored scholarship for not-for-profit leaders, worth \$40,000, is now open for applications.

The inaugural Fulbright Professional Scholarship in Non-Profit Leadership is a joint initiative of the Australia-American Fulbright Commission, the Australian Scholarships Foundation and the Origin Foundation.

Launched late last year, the scholarship will allow an emerging not-for-profit leader to travel to America for up to four months to study the operations of US organisations.

Chief Executive of the Australian Scholarships Foundation Amy Lyden said the scholarship would help to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Australian not-for-profit sector.

“The recognition provided by a Fulbright Scholarship is extremely important in lifting the profile of the NFP sector,” Ms Lyden said. “It emphasises the need to invest in the sector's leadership capability.”

Ms Lyden said the Australian not-for-profit sector touched virtually every Australian, “yet few comprehend the scale or significance of the sector.

“This means that improving the sector’s effectiveness in delivering its services represents big gains for the Australian community.”

Applications close on August 20. To apply, [click here](#).

AGSM scholarship

The Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM) at the University of New South Wales is offering 12 scholarships in 2012.

Seven scholarships, which are designed to encourage the development of Australia’s managers and executives, are to be awarded to not-for-profit and charitable organisations unable to afford executive development.

There are two rounds per year. Round one closed on April 30, with round two closing on June 30.

[Click here](#) for details.

Pride of Australia Medal nominations open

Nominations for the Pride of Australia Medal are now open.

The Medal, a News Limited initiative, is designed to recognise people who encourage and inspire us every day.

“They won’t look like superheroes, or have halos or wings; instead they are your next door neighbour, your mum, dad, teacher, shop assistant or friend,” the award organisers say.

“Their acts are often unnoticed and important to only a few, but their courage and compassion make us feel proud to be part of our communities.”

Nominations can be made in every state and under 10 categories: Outstanding Bravery; Courage; Heroism; Community Spirit; Child of Courage; Young Leader; Care and Compassion; Inspiration; Environment; and Fair Go.

Winners will receive a sterling silver medal at an awards ceremony in their state or territory, while a national winner will receive a gold medal at a national ceremony in October. [Click here](#) for more information.

Violence against women QLD conference

Seven Queensland domestic violence and sexual assault networks will hold a three-day conference to explore key themes from the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

The Violence against Women Queensland Alliance of Networks will host the *Violence against Women: an Inconvenient Reality* in Brisbane from August 7-9.

The conference will include keynote addresses from the Director of Imkaan Marai Larasai, Dr Clare Murphy, Heather Nancarrow and many more.

In early 2011, Federal Minister for the Status of Women Kate Ellis launched the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children as the basis of a 12-year strategy.

When launching the plan, Minister Ellis said it was the responsibility of both government and communities to stamp out violence against women.

“The National Plan is underpinned by the belief that involving all governments and the wider community is pivotal to reducing violence both in the short and longer term,” Ms Ellis said.

“No government or group can tackle this problem alone – by working together and challenging the attitudes and behaviours that allow violence to occur, all Australian Governments are saying a very loud ‘no’ to violence.”

For more information on the Queensland conference [click here](#).

SPECIAL OFFER: Law Handbook 2012 (Victoria)

In 2012, Fitzroy Legal Service is celebrating 40 years as one of Victoria's first community legal centres.

The organisation has also published the *Law Handbook* for 35 years. The *Law Handbook* is the trusted, plain English guide to the law in Victoria, prepared by 80 contributors who are all expert in their fields.

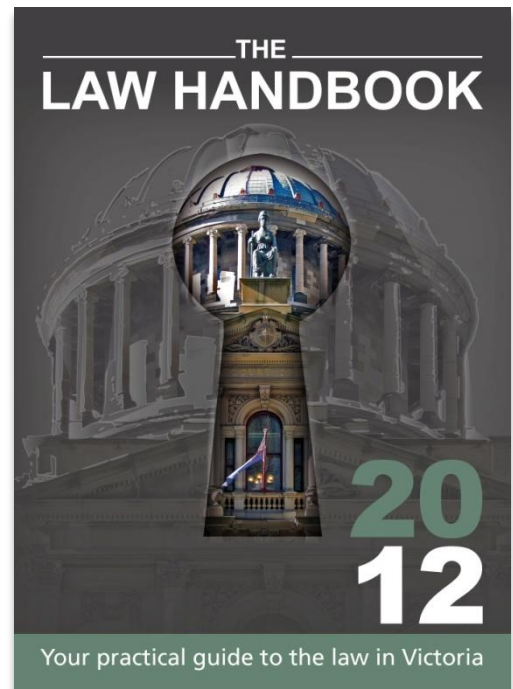
The Fitzroy Legal Service is offering Our Community members the opportunity to purchase the Law Handbook 2012 edition at the discounted price of \$75 (normal price \$95).

Sales of the *Law Handbook* help support the production and maintenance of a range of free websites and a community education program operated by the Fitzroy service.

The Law Handbook Online project (www.lawhandbook.org.au), which was launched as a free website in June 2009 and received its 1 millionth visitor in March this year, includes a range of fact sheets (www.lawhandbook.org.au/fact_sheets/), and an education portal (www.lawhandbook.org.au/education/).

As part of its community education program, Fitzroy Legal Service web and publications staff can attend your community organisation (metropolitan or rural) to provide an information session regarding its free legal resources.

To purchase the *Law Handbook 2012* at the special price of \$75, or arrange a community education session, phone Fitzroy Legal Service on 9419 3744 (ask for Fabiola or Lea) or email to fsuperina@fitzroy-legal.org.au.



RMIT student researchers (Melbourne)

RMIT University is offering the use of its students to community organisations who want to undertake supporting research before an event, communication initiative or campaign.

The students will be available to help conduct focus groups and discussions and survey research, as well as intercept interviews.

Students will be available for three months from mid-July.

For more details contact olivia.guntarik@rmit.edu.au

Are you a community-minded citizen? Of course you are! Become a councillor!

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is urging community-minded citizens to consider standing for council as the October 27 elections for Victoria's 79 councils approach.

CEO of the MAV Rob Spence said many citizens in local communities had what it took to become a great councillor.

"It doesn't matter if you're young or old; male or female; working, studying or retired. If you're over 18 and on the electoral roll for the council area, chances are you're eligible to stand for council," Mr Spence said.

"Becoming a councillor is a great hands-on way to serve your community and positively influence future directions and outcomes for the municipal area.

"The strength of our democracy is in people's participation, and diverse representation helps to reflect the diversity of our communities."

Nominations for the Victorian elections close on September 25.

Visit the [Stand for Council website](#) for information on eligibility and for details about upcoming MAV briefing sessions on how to run.

Grants – blink and you might miss them!

If you're not an *EasyGrants* subscriber, you risk missing out on key funding opportunities.

A compilation of all currently available grants is sent to subscribers via email once a month, with special grants bulletins issued when a good grant opportunity with a short open period arises between ordinary bulletins.

All this for just \$55 a year for community groups! Your subscription will pay for itself many times over.

If you're not a current subscriber, here's a couple you might have missed:

- The Federal Government's **Volunteer Grants Program**, providing grants of between \$1000 and \$5000 to support volunteers. Applications close on July 25.
- The Commonwealth Bank's **Community Grants** program, providing grants of up to \$10,000 to not-for-profit organisations that support the health and wellbeing of Australian children. The program closes on June 29.

But wait – there's more!

The next edition of *EasyGrants*, featuring around 50 pages of current grant opportunities, is due to hit your inbox on Thursday. [Click here](#) to find out more or subscribe.

Good Giving: disaster giving guidelines released

Bushfires and floods feature annually down under, bringing heartache and loss but also breeding a culture of disaster relief of which we can be proud.

The only problem is we don't always give what's needed. New guidelines aim to help ensure that communities in need receive more appropriate post-disaster donations.

The *National Guidelines for Managing Donated Goods*, released by South Australian Emergency Services Minister Jennifer Rankine, were created to provide the public with clear advice on how to effectively support a recovery process.

Ms Rankine said it was essential for the public to consult registered relief organisations to determine what communities needed most before making donations.

"The generosity of people is always appreciated; however, better planning and coordination across states and territories will help manage all aspects of disaster response and recovery," Ms Rankine said.

The guidelines provide suggestions for when it is best to donate money, clothing, health services, food, and other essentials following a disaster.

Final MoneyMinded workshops for 2012 (Victoria)

Community workers and volunteers are invited to the final MoneyMinded workshops of 2012, where they can gain access to financial information and tools to help their clients.

Community workers can then deliver training sessions to groups or use the resources in casework activities.

The free, three-day workshops include eight core topics: getting started; planning and budgeting; rights and responsibilities; tenancy; dealing with debt; understanding paperwork; credit providers; and planning for the future.

All workshops are held in Victoria, and are held between 9:30am and 4:30pm on dates in September, October and November. For more information or to register, contact Frances Menendez at fmendez@bsl.org.au, visit www.bsl.org.au/MoneyMinded or phone 0417 307 932.



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19. Good Moves: Community Sector Jobs & Board Vacancies

JOB VACANCY LISTINGS (Paid Positions)

New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
Chief Executive Officer	Nature Conservation Trust of NSW / Dakin Mayers	Details

Queensland

Education & Training - CALD Project Officer	Carers Queensland Inc	Details
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Victoria

Senior Fundraising Manager	CBM / Dakin Mayers	Details
Chief Operating Officer	CBM / Dakin Mayers	Details
GRANT MANAGER, AUSTRALIAN PROGRAMS	Gandel Philanthropy	Details
Chief Executive Officer	BEST Community Development	Details
Caseworker	Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project	Details
Senior Casework	Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project	Details
Meaningful Engagement Coordinator	Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project	Details
Volunteer Board Director	Doutta Galla Community Health	Details
Volunteer Coordinator	Western Health	Details
PROJECT MANAGER - DRUG & ALCOHOL EDUCATION TRAINING	Connecting People	Details
General Manager	Creativity Australia	Details
Java web developer	Our Community	Details

www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs

BOARD/COMMITTEE VACANCY LISTINGS (Volunteer Positions)

New South Wales

Board Position	Organisation	
General Board Member	Karabi Community & Development Services Inc	Details

Queensland

Secretary, General Board Member	JobWorks	Details
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South Australia

Marketing, Fundraising Expertise	United Way South Australia (UWSA)	Details
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Victoria

General Board Member	Eley Park Community Association	Details
General Board Member	Football Federation Victoria	Details
General Board Member	Yarra Ranges Enterprise Centres Ltd	Details
Treasurer	The River Nile Learning Centre	Details

Western Australia

Treasurer, Chair	ANTaR WA	Details
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www.ourcommunity.com.au/boardmatch

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20. 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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21. About Our Community

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

1. www.ourcommunity.com.au - Australia's most useful website (comprising the online Knowledge Centres) and publishing house - accelerating the impact of Australia's 600,000 community organisations and schools
2. GiveNow.com.au - Helping individuals and businesses give more, give smarter, give better, Give Now!
3. [Australian Institute for Community Practice and Governance](#) - practical and accessible certificated training delivered locally through our training Institute
4. [Australian Institute of Grants Management](#) - the unique suite of grants management services for government
5. [Australian Institute for Corporate Responsibility](#) - cutting edge corporate responsibility resources for large, medium and small business and community organisations

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

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