

Our Community MATTERS

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



Resources, News, Innovations and Tips on:

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

www.ourcommunity.com.au

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Our Community Matters is your free community sector update, brought to you by www.ourcommunity.com.au – the premier online destination for Australia's 700,000 community groups and schools. [Click here](#) to sign up to receive your free copy or read more about Our Community [here](#).

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I. Community View: Giving community groups a seat at the table



By Rhonda Galbally AO
CEO

For this year's **Communities in Control Conference** we've got a keynote speaker who's made it her life's work to get community groups a seat at the top table.

Health inequities across the globe, and within nations, are shocking and divisive. In both treatment and research the 90/10 rule applies – 90% of the funding goes to 10% of the disease burden, fixing minor discomforts that happen to rich people rather than life-threatening illnesses that happen to the poor.

Even when medical attention is directed at the right target, profits come from addressing symptoms rather than causes. We're fixated on treating diseases as they occur rather than looking to prevent them by addressing the true determinants of health – poverty, inequality, and discrimination.

Professor Fran Baum has been among the leaders in the modern health promotion movement that has so clearly demonstrated the shortcomings in our health systems. She knows, though, that it's not enough to change people's opinions; you have to go further and find the mechanisms that will change their incentives and the systems that will support better behaviour. And here she looks to community groups.

Professor Baum's research in recent years has been on the question of how the associations of civil society can be brought in to reorient our health systems to focus on the things that really matter. She's not just talking here about health lobby groups, either; she wants all the groups that speak for disadvantaged groups, all the clubs that know what their members are worried about, all the foundations that campaign for social improvement, to work together. And she has ideas about how this can be done.

Community groups, Prof. Baum argues, should be a lot more active in stimulating the kind of research that leads to practical changes. "Active participation, and more equitable relations between researchers and community members ... can increase the relevance of the research..." "Involvement of civil society groups in the design of randomised controlled trials could play a part in making [research] more responsive to equity issues." "Most health researchers have only studied the world; the point, however, is to change it for the better."

Money by itself isn't enough. The Gates Foundation is certainly pouring money into research – but it's still looking at technical fixes that ignore the persisting "political" issues that must also be addressed – greater equity in access to sustainable health systems, and the underlying social and environmental health determinants.

What we need, Prof. Baum says, is more research on the mechanisms of community governance to determine which models allow for effective community management – arrangements that will lead to participatory research harnessing local knowledge and laying the foundations for the application of that knowledge in the community.

Then we need to examine the role of community groups in influencing policy change in a critical manner at different levels of our political organisations. What strategies would make us more successful in lobbying for "healthy public policies"? A hint: policymaking is fundamentally about power and interests, and research findings are influential in changing policy only when they're part of campaigns involving mobilised groups of citizens.

Another set of questions relates to the representativeness and accountability of community groups themselves. Are they effective in enabling ordinary citizens to voice their concerns, or are they becoming élite groups operating with economic rationales similar to those of the institutions they are trying to influence? Who watches the watchmen?

Small groups, big issues, and hard questions. Professor Fran Baum knows them all in depth. Come along to **Communities in Control** and see what tasks she's got for you.

A blue banner for the Communities in Control Conference 2008. The title "Communities in Control Conference 2008" is in large, bold, black and red text. Below it, in smaller white text, is "The Community Challenge: Building political, environmental, social & economic pathways towards true social inclusion". At the bottom, in red and white text, it says "REGISTER NOW Visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic2008 or call 03 9320 6800".

**Communities in Control
Conference 2008**

The Community Challenge:
Building political, environmental, social &
economic pathways towards true social inclusion

REGISTER NOW
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or call 03 9320 6800

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2. Help us 'Join In, Join Up!'

Our Community is uniting with The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and Telstra on an exciting new project called 'Join In, Join Up!'

Recognising the potential of the 5000 community pharmacies across Australia to be major resources for the community, the goal of the project is to get the message out to as many people as possible that joining a community organisation can have huge benefits for your health – something you all know already!

Pharmacists and pharmacy assistants will be able to help people get connected with a great community group in their local area, acting as a link between the public and the community organisations listed on the Our Community Directory of Community Organisations – you!

Join In, Join Up! webpages will soon be added to the Our Community website, providing a range of resources on finding a community group to join or making your group more inclusive.

In addition, someone visiting a community pharmacy (which statistics show we do once every 11 days) can pick up a leaflet, watch a community service ad, talk to the pharmacy staff about the benefits of joining a community group, and obtain details of community groups they may be interested in.

Anyone visiting a community pharmacy can get access to the Join In, Join Up! resources, but nine specific groups with particular needs will have access to additional resources. These are

- [People with a longer-term illness](#)
- [People with a disability](#)
- [Carers](#)
- [New parents](#)
- [People with a mental health issue](#)
- [Older people](#)
- [People from a non-English-speaking background](#)
- [People who are lonely](#)
- [People experiencing grief.](#)

And this is where we need you to join in.

We have compiled nine lists comprising organisations that we believe will be useful as points of contact for people in these nine groups. The lists will be available in the Join In, Join Up! area of the website and on leaflets that pharmacy staff will be able to download and print off.

Please take a look at the lists by clicking on the links above. They are a work in progress and we welcome any feedback, suggestions for additions, subtractions and amendments that you may have. You can send your feedback to rosem@ourcommunity.com.au.

Join us in creating a revolution in connecting community!

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3. Constitutions: What is their force?

One of the most common questions we get at Our Community is to do with the power behind a community group's constitution.

The story tends to go something like this.

You set up a community group and want to have it incorporated as a legal entity, so you have to adopt a set of rules – a constitution. There are a set of Model Rules in the legislation, and you have to adopt either these ones or something else rather like them. You adopt the constitution at a general meeting, send it in, and the responsible government department files it away under your name.

Slightly later on, you note that the chair or the treasurer or the secretary or the board in general is doing something that looks to be a clear breach of the constitution; they've adopted a resolution despite there not being a quorum, or they've ignored a resolution that did have a quorum, or something else that you think is wrong.

You point this out to them.

You say, "You can't do that! I'm going to stop you!"

They say, "You and which army?"

That's actually a very good question. When you go to the responsible government department, the one that made you adopt a constitution in the first place, you find that it has on its website words somewhat like these ones, which appear on the Consumer Affairs Victoria website in big letters:

"The rules of an incorporated association constitute the terms of a contract between the association and its members. A breach of the rules is a civil matter to be resolved by the parties. Consumer Affairs Victoria does not generally intervene in disputes under the rules."

You're not going to get an army out of them. You're on your own.

You do have remedies; they're just not very attractive ones. You can hire an expensive lawyer and go to an expensive court and, quite possibly, have a judgement in your favour.

In most cases, though, that involves using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. It's almost surely going to be costly, time-consuming, resource-intensive, infuriating, and uncertain. You may not win. If you do win, you may not get costs. If you do get costs, the other party may appeal to a higher court.

(Remember the story of the two men who went to a lawyer to determine the true owner of an oyster. The lawyer considered the issue judiciously, and awarded one man the top shell and the other the bottom shell. The oyster itself he took as his fee.)

Your other remedy is to vote the rascals out. The board may, in your opinion, be malign or incompetent, but it's rare for them to be working so hard at it that you can't afford to wait until the next Annual General Meeting – particularly as all other ways of addressing the problem are going to take just as long or longer. Get hold of the membership list and start winning over the voters.

Be careful what you say, though, and read up on the law of libel. Don't say anything you can't prove. Ideally, don't say anything that's going to deepen divisions and cause even more ill feeling. Get yourself (and/or your supporters) on the board so you can fix things.

If you lose – if you don't have a majority of the membership on your side – then you just have to accept that. Your only choices then are to lump it or to leave.

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4. Governments move closer to the community sector

The Victorian Government will establish a new Office for the Community Sector as part of a \$14 million plan aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of the sector.

The *Victorian Government Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations*, announced earlier this month, comes on top of news that the Federal Government is working towards establishing a formal compact with the non-government sector by the end of the year.

Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector, Senator Ursula Stephens, confirmed the compact timetable in Melbourne last month. A round of consultation is planned to take place mid-year.

In addition to the compact, Senator Stephens said the government wanted to:

- Gain more detailed information on the number and scope of organisations in the sector
- Ask the Productivity Commission to measure the direct and indirect economic contributions of the sector
- Improve the sector's regulatory burden by cutting back red tape and reducing inconsistencies in approaches to incorporation and tax regimes in the sector.

Meanwhile, the Victorian Government says its planning to:

- Establish a new Office for the Community Sector as a focal point across government to enhance working with community organisations for the next three years.
- Set up a portable long service leave scheme to help the sector retain skilled workers.
- Expand access to information and support services that help community organisations meet challenges such as performance, long-term strategy and capacity development.
- Provide funding for the sector to consider establishing a new representative body for community organisations.
- Fund a feasibility study for a National Academic Centre of Leadership Excellence for the sector.
- Develop a Community Services Workforce Capability Framework, which will focus on ways community organisations can develop the skills and capabilities they need to improve service delivery.

In addition, millions of dollars will be set aside to develop a body to support emerging community enterprises, and to establish a dozen local community foundations in disadvantaged areas with the aim of bringing community agencies and business supporters together to identify needs and fund local community projects.

Professor Alan Fels, who chaired the Stronger Community Organisations Project, welcomed the news.

"It is clear that community organisations are of growing importance as a vehicle for community participation, for service delivery and for addressing social exclusion," he said.

"My report aimed to set out a framework to ensure the future of this important sector and I'm glad that the government has adopted our recommendations."

A copy of the plan is available at www.dpcd.vic.gov.au.

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5. Community workers achieve pin-up status

Long hours, poor pay, outdated equipment, funding shortages, reporting demands – what's not to love about working in the community sector?

Seriously, anyone who works in the community sector knows there are enough rewards to overcome the challenges, but that message does not seem to be filtering through to newcomers.

A new study has shown that more needs to be done to promote the community sector as an employment option generally – a challenge a new Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS) initiative hopes to help overcome.

The 'Care to Make a Difference' exhibition aims to increase understanding of the roles offered in the community sector and to raise the profile of the sector as an employer.

The team behind the exhibition hopes that it will break down some of the barriers that currently exist in recruitment of staff and shake off old fashioned, preconceived ideas, spreading the word to a new generation in a competitive employment market.

The exhibition will include a series of Community Service Worker pin-up posters featuring pictures of 'real life' community service workers with brief 'What I do' and 'What I love about my job' statements, providing an upbeat and innovative marketing campaign for the sector.



It aims to demonstrate the satisfaction of having a role where lack of motivation is not an issue and where what you do actually makes a difference to people's lives.

The exhibition will be launched at Melbourne City Square (corner of Swanston and Collins streets) at midday on Friday, May 2 and will run until May 22.

For details, and to view all eight community service worker 'pin-ups', visit the Showcasing the Community Sector website at www.vcross.org.au/what-we-do/community-sector/showcasing.htm.

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6. IDEAS YOU CAN STEAL: Finding the quirk factor

Bicycle Victoria has come up with a novel way to get people to come to its website and learn about the health and environmental benefits of cycling.

The organisation's website features a simple 'Ride to Work Calculator' that allows you to calculate how many Tim-Tams you could burn off if you were to cycle to work instead of using other forms of transport.

For example, a person weighing 80 kgs who rode for 30 minutes at a "cruising" speed of 16km/hr would burn off the equivalent of 2.5 Tim Tams or 2.5 Weet-Bix, according to the site. Not bad!

The 'Calculate the Benefits' page also links to an RACV resource to help you calculate how much it costs to own and operate a car (and therefore how much money you'd save by switching to pedal-power), and a Federal Government site that allows you to calculate the greenhouse gas emissions you are generating by driving to work.

It's a powerful message, and a great demonstration of how adding some numbers and context – and some quirk and fun – to an advocacy campaign can help to drive the message home without banging people over the head.

You can see the site in action (and do your own Tim-Tam calculations) at www.bv.com.au/join-in/30228/.

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7. Get ready for giving season!

The Australian Giving Centre, the free service for community groups and donors operated by Our Community with the support of Westpac, is headed for another record year of donations.

With only a couple of months remaining until the end of the financial year, the centre is on track to break its own records in:

- Dollars given;
- Number of donations made; and
- Appeals listed.

In the nine months to the end of March, more than \$844,400 has been donated through the Giving Centre, meaning it is on track to break the record (excluding the tsunami year) of \$1.19 million given through the Centre in 2006-07.

So far this financial year, November (\$124,926) and December (\$143,232) have been peak giving months for the Giving Centre. However both are likely to be topped by the usual rush that occurs during May and June – at the end of the financial year.

In 2006-07, more than \$384,500 was donated through the Giving Centre during June; this year, that figure could come close to \$500,000.

We're also on track to eclipse last financial year's figures for the number of donations made through the Giving Centre – we've already passed the 9800-mark, compared to 11,318 in the previous financial year.

Currently there are almost 1150 separate active appeals listed at the Giving Centre, meaning donors have more choice than ever before about which good cause should receive their funds.

With the end of financial year approaching, here are five ways your group can prepare itself and receive more donations:

1. **List your appeal at the Giving Centre** – join the 1150 groups already listed for donations; it's easy, and free! Go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/receivedonations to find out more.
2. **Plan your end-of-financial-year campaign** – there is a lot of money sloshing around at this time of year for community groups with a good story to tell. Get your appeal in place now.
3. **Emphasise the tax benefits of giving** – if your group has deductible gift recipient status, make sure you make it very clear in all your appeal documentation that gifts to your group are tax-deductible. If you don't have DGR, don't despair (and don't claim that you do have it) – if you frame your appeals well, you'll still be able to take part in giving season.
4. **Make your appeal button prominent** – make sure your 'Donate Now!' button is well-designed and visible from your home page (and, if you can, from every page of your website). Make it as easy as possible for people to give to your group the very second they're moved to.
5. **Keep donors involved** – with an influx of donations comes an opportunity for your group to expand its donor base, and database, by asking donors to sign up for newsletters, updates or for regular planned giving.

New way to give



A new section has recently been added to the Australian Giving Centre to help people find out how to convert small and otherwise unmarketable shareholdings into donations for a good cause. To find out more, go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving, or click the button to the left to go directly to the new section of the site.

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8. Online community harmony guide launched

Community groups interested in putting in place initiatives that promote local harmony may be able to benefit from a new set of downloadable best practice case studies.

The case studies showcase projects and interventions aimed at fostering community harmony and cohesion in multicultural neighbourhoods by:

- reducing racism and the stereotyping of marginalised groups;
- encouraging mutual interaction and dialogue between communities;
- addressing important community issues and concerns; and
- engaging in community activities beyond the mere celebration of multiculturalism.

The case studies are available on the new StepOne website at www.stepone.org.au, which has been developed by the Centre for Research on Social Inclusion at Macquarie University and is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

The site – which also includes tips about where to begin in promoting local harmony, a 'Good Practice Guide', and links to relevant research, funding and other relevant websites – was launched in Sydney in late March.

For more information, go to www.stepone.org.au.

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Westpac Community Idol

Visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol to nominate now!

As part of the 2008 Communities in Control conference, we want to find the community group in Australia that stands out from the pack.

We want to find the community group that is an innovative, vibrant, effective, representative and participative leader.

We want to find the 2008 Community Idol!

How To Apply

It's simple. Nominate your own community group by answering the questions on the entry form, briefly explaining how and why your organisation is so special and why it stands as an inspiration to other community groups. It is not about being the biggest or the best resourced or the most high profile group, it's about being a community group that does what it does well and stands out as a beacon of community leadership.

To be eligible for prize money of \$3000 and the mantle of "2008 Community Idol" you need to fill in the entry form and return it to Our Community by Friday 9 May 2008. Three community groups will be selected as finalists and a representative of each will present their case at this year's Communities in Control conference in Melbourne on 16 June, 2008. Ten additional "highly commended" groups will also be acknowledged.

Attendees at the conference (expected to be a capacity crowd of 1500 from right across the community sector) will then vote on which of the three short-listed groups they believe is most deserving of the title of 2008 Westpac Community Idol. The prize will be announced at the end of day two of the conference on 17 June, 2008.

 Westpac

**Be the 2008
Community Idol!**
Win \$3000 cash
and more!

Prizes

The community group acclaimed as the 2008 Westpac Community Idol will receive \$3000 in cash. All three finalists will also receive all current books produced by Our Community, and 12-month subscriptions to all Our Community newsletters (valued at around \$1000). Accommodation and flights for a representative from all three finalist groups to attend the Communities in Control conference will also be provided.

Judging

A panel of eminent community leaders will select three finalists and 10 groups to receive commendations. A representative of each finalist group will be notified by telephone.

The three finalists will be interviewed at the conference, with the winner decided via a popular vote of conference attendees.

Please note that in order to ensure that a range of groups are given the opportunity to have their voices heard through Community Idol, highly commended and finalist groups are placed in the "win bin" for three years and are not eligible to reapply for three years. To view previously honoured groups go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/halloffame

Eligibility

The 2008 Community Idol must:

- Be a community organisation
- Be an incorporated association
- Have been in existence for a minimum of two years

All nominations must be approved by the group's Chair/President or head staff member

How to Enter

Choose an option:

1. Enter online by going to www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol/signup and filling in the online form.
2. Download an entry form by visiting www.ourcommunity.com.au/communityidol. Fill in the form and post to Our Community, PO Box 354 North Melbourne 3051, or fax to (03) 9326 6859.
3. If you would like a hard copy entry form posted out to you, please contact Our Community by telephoning (03) 9320 6800 or email to service@ourcommunity.com.au. Please allow plenty of time for return mail.

Closing Dates

All entries must be received by Our Community by 5pm on Friday 9 May 2008

**See the Community
Idols in action by
attending the Communities
in Control Conference**
www.ourcommunity/cic2008

9. Securing a digital future for community media

It's a tough climate out there for any media outlet, but spare a thought for community media, which is struggling more than most to make its way in a digital world.

At present, community TV stations including C31 in Melbourne, TVS in Sydney, Access 31 in Perth, BRIZ 31 in Brisbane and C31 in Adelaide broadcast only in analogue – and with Federal Government plans to switch off the network by the end of 2012, and millions of viewers already having made the switch to digital themselves, that constitutes a big problem.

The sector has been pushing for a guarantee that it will be given space on the digital spectrum and funding to assist in the conversion to digital, but despite an ongoing campaign by the industry, and hopes that the change of government might bring an end to the problem, community stations have remained shut out.

Community radio is not faring much better.

Writing in *Crikey* recently, media commentator Margaret Simons said a “mixture of stone-walling and high hurdles” was threatening the ability of community broadcasting in Australia and resulting in a “stressed and burdened community radio sector”.

Simons said that community radio stations around Australia had been given a deadline to sign up – at a cost of \$22,000 per group and “amid great financial strain” – to joint venture companies to help run the infrastructure for digital radio.

“Without signing, community radio risks being locked out of the discussions that will guide the future of digital radio,” she said. “Yet signing meant making major financial commitments to companies effectively managed by the commercial radio stations, without any clarity on the potential liabilities in the future.”

Simons said the Howard Government's last budget had included a commitment of \$10.1 million to help community radio switch to digital but the Rudd Government was yet to act. Communications Minister Stephen Conroy had “failed to respond to repeated requests to bring forward funding to help community radio stations take the steps into the digital world,” she said.

There is one small ray of hope for the TV sector at least, with Mr Conroy reportedly having conducted some “open and frank meetings” with the sector recently in an attempt to come up with a digital solution.

If you care about community media, now might be a good time to let your [local MP](#) and [Mr Conroy](#) know just how much.

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10. Check your cheques

A [new American report](#) says that in 2006 fraud cost US not-for-profit organisations \$40 billion, or some 13% of the roughly \$300 billion given to charity that year.

The typical theft from a charity, the report said, was committed by a female employee with no criminal record who earned less than \$50,000 a year and had worked for the organisation for at least three years. The amount she stole was less than \$40,000.

Almost 95% of the reported frauds entailed loss of cash, and a majority of those involved false or inflated invoices, billing for expenses that were never incurred and cheque tampering.

The report's research is not particularly rigorous – that \$40 billion, for example, is based on no evidence other than an assumption that the sector has the same 6% embezzlement rate as the private sector, and with the average theft being under \$40,000 would imply that there were one million not-for-profit embezzlers out there, which seems highly unlikely – but it should prompt Australian community groups to take another look at their financial systems.

BDO Kendalls, an accounting firm that produces [biannual reports](#) on fraud in the Australian not-for-profit sector, suggests that

- Cash theft and kickbacks/bribery were the most common types of fraud in this country's not-for-profit sector;
- The largest number of frauds reported occurred in organisations with no volunteers; and

- The key factors organisations believed were required to reduce the risk of fraud were strong internal controls and an ethical organisational culture.

Anybody who's looked at the financial papers recently knows that crime in the for-profit sector occurs on a much grander scale and with much less fear of consequences than in the not-for-profit sector.

This is an area, though, where perceptions are what count. When one not-for-profit organisation hits the headlines, the whole sector suffers from the negative publicity and increased suspicion.

It's worth repeating Our Community's advice on basic risk management procedures that should be put in place to minimise the likelihood of fraud occurring in your organisation:

- All cheques should contain two signatures – three to four people in the organisation should be authorised signatories, but no two related people should be included in that list – i.e. no husband/wife, mother/daughter, girlfriend/boyfriend, aunt/nephew etc. combinations.
- For organisations that use internet banking, ensure at least two “keys” are needed to access the account – this is the electronic equivalent of requiring two signatures on a cheque.
- Cheques should never be signed in advance. If a signatory is taking extended leave, formally transfer their authority to another group member.
- Receipting and banking should be undertaken by two people – i.e. the person that receives money should not be the person that banks it.
- Put in place clear guidelines on authorisation of spending – who can spend, how much they can spend, what they can spend on, what means they can use to spend.
- Where credit cards are in use, ensure there is a clear credit card policy in place and followed.
- Ensure your annual auditing is meaningful – make sure you know and spell out exactly what you want the auditor to look at.
- Ask questions – don't take any information provided on face value; don't withhold questions so as not to offend the treasurer.
- Ensure a Treasurer's Report is tabled at every board/committee meeting. This should include an explanation of how the organisation is performing against the budget, the bank reconciliation, and – importantly – up-to-the-minute bank statements.

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11. Community Briefs

How to make a profit

Free, gratis, and for nothing, here's an unbeatable tip on how to make a profit on your next project.

Don't make a loss.

OK, that sounds obvious – but if it's that obvious, how come so many community groups walk willingly into funding agreements that have them making a stone cold motherless deficit, simply because they don't charge enough to cover their full costs?

In the UK, for example, [recent research](#) has found that a quarter of the community groups they asked were making a loss of 9% or more in their income on public service delivery activities (half the groups almost broke even, and the rest made a tiny 1.6% surplus).

In Australia, too, we've heard the same stories. Governments look for the lowest tender, and don't want to pay the true cost – what are we to do?

Well, we could begin by knowing what the true cost was; and here a recent production from English group Acevo will be very helpful.

Their *Guide to Full Cost Recovery* – a toolkit developed four years ago, and Acevo's best selling publication ever since – is now available free from www.fullcostrecovery.org.uk/main/index.php?content=fcr_toolkit_download.

Pull it in and start working out what you ought to be asking (no, demanding). And if you can show the money-givers the calculations, they may appreciate that driving their operators into deficit isn't the most sensible policy.

Revealing the simple secrets of successful community groups

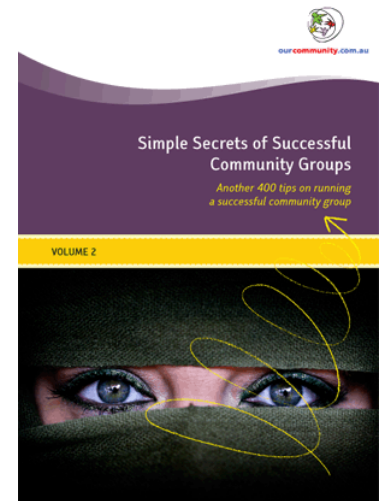
Our Community's latest book contains another 400 tips on how to run a successful community group.

The book – volume two of the popular *Simple Secrets of Successful Community Groups* – packages the practical knowledge of Our Community CEO Rhonda Galbally into bite-sized chunks.

Each of the 50 articles tackles a different topic, helping to steer the reader through areas of fundraising, marketing, planning, membership and internal and external relations, providing plain-language, commonsense tips and advice along the way.

The new book, along with the first edition which has been revised and reprinted, is now available from the Our Community website.

Meanwhile, the ever-popular *Winning Grants Funding in Australia* has also been revised and reprinted, and can also be ordered through the Our Community website. For more information, go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/books.



New guide to accessing skilled volunteers

A new guide aimed at helping community organisations access skilled volunteers will be launched next month.

The guide, developed by the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS), contains stories from a variety of organisations – including Leadership Victoria, Melbourne Cares, Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH), Volunteering Australia, Volunteering Victoria, Ballarat Cares, Good Company and Oxfam Skill Share – about how they've worked with and accessed skilled volunteers.

The book, *Skilled Volunteers: a Guide for Community Organisations*, will be launched in Melbourne on May 15.

For more information about the launch and the guide, contact Laura Mondon, Sector Development Assistant on (03) 9654 5050.

Have your say on community-business partnerships

Community groups are being asked to take part in a survey designed to help improve the relationships between the not-for-profit and corporate sectors.

Survey organisers hope to learn more about how community groups and businesses can work together successfully, and what challenges they face.

The survey has been commissioned by the Department of Housing, Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and is being undertaken by the Centre for Corporate Public Affairs.

It follows on from the Centre's 2007 report, 'Corporate Community Investment in Australia' (www.accpa.com.au), which was the result of consultation with the corporate sector.

The Centre is hoping for input from a broad cross-section of organisations and will provide all participants with hard copies of the report, which is due for completion by mid-2008.

To complete the survey, go to <http://live.everyonecounts.com.au/app/367/363>.

THUMBS UP: Not-for-profit organisations win transparency gong



Thumbs up to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the Australian Community Support Organisation, which have been recognised for their commitment to transparency.

The organisations were named winner and runner-up respectively of the inaugural PricewaterhouseCoopers Transparency Award in recognition of their commitment to quality reporting of both financial and non-financial performance.

The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation was praised for its clear, well-written and easily accessible reporting, with particular praise set aside for the organisation's inclusion of a five-year strategic plan on its website, the opportunities it provides for stakeholder input, and its comprehensive reporting on fundraising activities.

The awards are designed to recognise and encourage ongoing improvement in the quality and transparency of reporting in the Australian not-for-profit sector.

PricewaterhouseCoopers partner Rick Millen said the quality of reporting in the sector was highly variable.

"Some organisations produce good quality, transparent reporting, but the general standard needs improvement in order to meet the information needs and expectations of all stakeholders," he said.

The awards jury found that while annual reports were well-presented and clear in their reporting of strategy and results, there was often insufficient information provided around measurement of performance against strategy.

Governance and stakeholder reporting and organisational risk management policies and procedures were areas in need of greater articulation, the jury found.

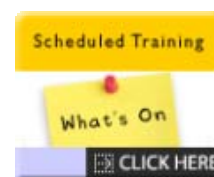
Fundraising, marketing, governance, meetings & conflict resolution workshops

Our Community has a large number of low-cost training opportunities coming up for community groups of all sizes and in all parts of Australia.

Opportunities include:

- **Intensive Community Fundraising Seminars**
Learn how to make the most money ever for your group
Melbourne (May 2), Brisbane (May 9), Sydney (May 16), Adelaide (May 23) & Perth (May 30)
- **Schools Marketing Seminar**
Learn how to market your school to increase fundraising, support and enrolments
Melbourne (May 2), Brisbane (May 9) & Sydney (May 16)
- **Secrets of Successful Boards**
Learn how to create a more harmonious, productive and effective board/committee
Melbourne (June 2), Brisbane (June 13), Cairns (June 20), Sydney (June 23) & Perth (June 30)
- **Making Meetings Work**
Learn how to run effective meetings and save time
Melbourne (May 19)
- **Killing Me Softly**
Conflict resolution strategies for community groups
Melbourne (May 19)

For information or to book a spot, visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/scheduledtraining or click the button above.



Match your addresses with Community Site in a Box

A new initiative will allow geographic communities across Australia to build their own websites and create personalised email addresses which match their postal addresses.

For example, a community could apply for a Community Geographic Domain Name such as www.buninyong.vic.au, and then, by using the Community Site in a Box program to build their site, they could issue individual email accounts such as bob.smith@buninyong.vic.au.

A local community organisation, club or group could also get a personalised email address – e.g. chamberofcommerce@buninyong.vic.au.

Not-for-profit group .au Community Domains (auCD), which administers Community Geographic Domain Names, is behind the Community Site in a Box free software.

The websites and email addresses are designed to help communities develop an easy to remember community website which can be used to benefit a broad range of community interests.

For more information, visit: www.aucd.org.au/siteinabox.

No cost websites at Comfypage

Community groups can build and customise their own webpage through a new service called Comfypage.

Perth-based firm Affinity Software has created the no-cost website builder where “anyone with a PC, internet access and basic Microsoft Word processing skills” can build their website, have a presence on the web within a day, and maintain the site for life – all for no charge.

The service has no sign-up fees or web address costs, while allowing users to have a “fully functional and fully supported basic website”. Comfypage states that each basic site has “its own web address, is searchable on Google and other search engines, and can carry all the information and pictures you want.”

If your group wishes to go a step further and take up advanced website options such as email ‘contact us’ forms and credit card payment facilities, you can do so for a small one-off charge, from around \$7 (though don’t forget, if you want an credit card-based online donations service, you can organise that for free through the Australian Giving Centre at www.ourcommunity.com.au/receivedonations).

For more information about Comfypage, including examples of sample webpages and templates, visit www.comfypage.com.

Down tools! Everybody out!

There’s general agreement in the community sector that Australia’s volunteers are in the main under-appreciated, under-supported, and under-resourced. Imagine for a moment that this was happening in the private sector. People would not, you can be assured, sit there and take it. They’d fight back. They’d go on strike!

So why don’t they? An English voluntary sector spokesperson has proposed exactly that, suggesting that every volunteer in the land stay at home for a day.

“If every volunteer in the UK went on strike for a day it would demonstrate the critical role they play in society,” CSV director Dame Elisabeth Hoodless said, “And it would raise the profile of volunteering.”

“Volunteers are rarely appreciated or thanked,” she said. “But people would notice if they disappeared for a day. There would be no public events without the Red Cross, no school outings without unpaid helpers and plenty of missed hospital appointments without volunteers to drive people.”

That’d show them!

So why don’t volunteers do it? The trouble is, of course, that volunteers do these things because they think they ought to be done, and that makes it hard to withdraw their labour. Pity, that.

Wellbeing index reveals connection between part-time volunteering and wellbeing

Every few months Robert Cummins and his Deakin University team go out to ask Australians how happy they are, and every year he bundles up our opinions into the Australian Wellbeing Index.

The results of the 18th survey have just been released, showing that our level of happiness hasn’t actually shifted much since the last survey, or indeed the first survey; people tend to settle on a level of happiness and not move that far away from it up or down. It is notable, though, that:

“Part-time volunteers have higher wellbeing than non-volunteers. The group to benefit most are people who are separated. This may imply that the positive effect of volunteering is most evident in the early stages and dissipates as the activity become routine.”

Full-time volunteers, on the other hand,

“score highly in their satisfaction with the Community domain (+3.3 points above the normal range) but otherwise score within the normal range. It is particularly interesting that their rating of ‘what you are currently achieving in life’ is at the lower-margin of the normal range. Thus, the fact of being a full-time volunteer is not, of itself, able to take satisfaction with personal achievement above the normal range. In fact, the mean value for this domain (71.7) is well below that of people who are fulltime employed.”

It’s up to community group organisers, then, to try and boost volunteer’s wellbeing by letting them know how highly we value them.

Getting business on board to grow community enterprises

Considering starting a community enterprise? Just started one? The findings of the final evaluation report from the Community Enterprise Development Initiative (CEDI) could be of interest.

The report shows that the CEDI has led to an increased understanding of the different types of community enterprise and the vital elements required for them to flourish.

It highlights the continuing need for knowledge building, networking and development support, and identifies critical areas for development of the sector.

Engaging the business sector was identified as one key contributor to the success of a community enterprise.

Among the recommendations made in the report is the establishment of an independent body for the sector which could, among other things, advocate on its behalf.

The report has been researched by Sharon Bond for the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and is online at www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Bond_Growing_community_enterprise_CEDI_evaln_2008.pdf.

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 issues in Australia.

Some of the events taking place over the next month include:

- **International Composting Awareness Week:** May 4-10
- **Australian Dance Week:** May 5-11
- **International No Diet Day:** May 6
- **National Mothering Week:** May 5-11
- **Support Allergic Friends Everywhere Week:** May 11-17
- **International Nurses Day:** May 12
- **Law Week:** May 12-19
- **National Volunteer Week:** May 12-18
- **National Neighbourhood House Day:** May 14
- **International Day of Families:** May 15
- **Education Week:** May 18-24
- **National Public Education Week:** May 26-June 1
- **National Sorry Day:** May 26
- **Reconciliation Week:** May 27-June 3

More events, plus the full listing for each event (including organisational contact details and websites), can be found in the online Community Calendar at www.ourcommunity.com.au/calendar.

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12. Community Classifieds – notices, offers, awards, giveaways & tips

WANTED: team members

Long-time friend of Our Community Brett de Hoedt will be leading a Habitat for Humanity team to the southern Indian town of Pondicherry in June and is looking for more people to join the team.

The team of around 12 volunteers will travel to India on June 17 to work alongside local families and tradespeople as part of a two-week trip.

As Brett puts it: "You don't need to be a builder, fitness freak, do-gooder or international development graduate. We just want enthusiastic, friendly, flexible people keen to make a small contribution against poverty while having an unforgettable travel experience."

Brett says volunteers will get a terrific, non-touristy view of India – meeting and working alongside locals, visiting local schools, playing cricket and “generally be treated like a rock star”.

“Habitat trips make any other travel feel like...tourism,” he says.

For more information contact Brett on 0414 713 802 or email to brett@hootville.com.

WANTED: manual handling, sun protection policies

Nicholli Cottage Neighbourhood Centre in Sydney is on the look-out for a manual handling policy that would be suitable for a neighbourhood centre.

The centre is also looking for a sun protection policy that it may be able to adapt and adopt.

If you have policies in place that you think would be of use, please email them to Kathy at kathy@froggy.com.au (and please CC service@ourcommunity.com.au so we can put them in our [Policy Bank](#) for others to access as well).

SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE: Shipping donations overseas

Fairly regularly at Our Community we get inquiries from an individual or a group with goods to donate to overseas communities, but who are unsure how to go about transporting them.

The latest request has come from the Handweavers & Spinners Guild of Victoria, which is looking to donate equipment and books for displaced women of Kenya, but does not have the funds to ship them.

We'd love to hear your ideas and tips for ways and means of getting donations overseas at minimal or no cost.

Send your tips to kathyr@ourcommunity.com.au.

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13. Our Community Hero: Helen Burrell

Congratulations to wildlife rehabilitator Helen Burrell, who has been selected as this month's Community Hero.

Along with her husband David, Helen runs the Leopold Wildlife Shelter and Rescue, which has a special area of expertise in hand-raising joeys and other orphaned baby animals.

The shelter also trains others in safety rescue and care for native wildlife, as well as carrying out public education efforts.

Helen's nominator, Jodie Blackney, says that Helen dedicates her life to help save injured and orphaned native animals.

“Wildlife carers are amazing people, their voluntary work to help our injured wildlife is very physically, emotionally, and financially demanding, and it requires all their considerable time – all without funding,” she says.

Helen will receive a Community Heroes certificate, a selection of Our Community books and a 12-month subscription to a range of Our Community newsletters.

If you would like to read more about Helen and other past Community Heroes, or find out how to nominate a Community Hero, visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/heroes.



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14. Good Moves – community jobs & board/committee vacancies



Good Moves :: Jobs Bulletin

www.ourcommunity.com.au

JOB VACANCY LISTINGS (Paid Positions)

New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
Team Coordinator	Social Ventures Australia	Details
Financial Controller	The ISIS Foundation	Details
Communications & Partnership Manager	The ISIS Foundation / ISIS (Asia Pacific) Pty Limited	Details
CHILD CARE SERVICES DIRECTOR	PENINSULA COMMUNITY CENTRE	Details
External Relations Officer	Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII)	Details

Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
Community Development Worker - Locum	Community Development Office	Details
Librarian/ Library Technician	Global Learning Centre	Details

Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
Parent Support Worker	Association for Children with a Disability Inc.	Details
HR Coordinator	Home Ground Services	Details
Chief Executive Officer	Association for Children with a Disability	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 [please click here](#) (This matching service is free)

New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
facilitator	Vets Beyond Borders	Details
Memberships & Fundraising Officer, Publicity Officer	Mountains Youth Services Team Inc.	Details

Northern Territory

Job Title	Organisation	
Chair, General Board Member, Vice President	Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT	Details

Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
Treasurer	Studies of Society and Environment Association of Old (SOSEAQ)	Details
General Board Member	Gold Coast Drug Council Inc.	Details

Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
General Board Member	Inner East Mental Health Services Association Inc	Details
General Board Member	The Foundation for Developing Cambodian Communities	Details
Treasurer, Secretary, General Board Member	Graffiti Hurts - Australia	Details
Treasurer	Wavecare Counselling Service Inc	Details
General Board Member	Godfrey Street Community House	Details
General Board Member	Volunteer West	Details

www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs

Your best choice to find and advertise a job

To advertise a job, go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs/advertise - (A low fee of \$30 apply)

NOTE: Board vacancies can be placed free – go to www.ourcommunity.com.au/boardmatch to find out how

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15. 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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16. About Our Community

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise that provides advice and tools for Australia's 700,000 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 700,000 community organisations
2. [Australia's Giving Centre](#) – Helping individuals and businesses give in every way
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.

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