



Edition 5/2003

Welcome to the latest edition of ***Our Community Matters***, our regular free community update. It is yet another benefit of membership of www.ourcommunity.com.au - the premier destination for Australia's 700,000 community, education and non-profit groups. ourcommunity.com.au provides community groups with the latest funding, scholarship and fundraising news as well as practical advice and the opportunity to list for free online donations and free online volunteers through the **National Community Giving Centre**.

We also provide discounted services and products, including the **banking services deal** with the National Australia Bank which provides transaction accounts specifically tailored for community groups.

A summary of our services is listed at the end of this newsletter. If you have trouble reading this newsletter or have any comments please let us know at brianw@ourcommunity.com.au.

In this Issue

Contents

- 1. Welcome by Rhonda Galbally AO, CEO of ourcommunity.com.au**
- 2. Nominate your grassroots group for a National Volunteering Award.**
- 3. Make sure your Annual Report satisfies your stakeholders - use the ICAA checklist.**
- 4. Push for Australians to establish a giving plan to expand their support of community groups.**
- 5. Capacity for groups to now take monthly credit card payments through the National Community Giving Centre.**
- 6. Media - Discovering the Habits of highly-effective non-profit media spokespeople.**
- 7. Do you know what tax concessions you are entitled to?**
- 8. Another reason why advocacy is such an important part of what community groups do.**
- 9. Community briefs - bits and pieces from the community sector.**
- 10. Products and Services**
- 11. Fast Forward.**

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

Welcome,

What a month – June (the end of financial year) always seems to be the fastest and coldest (in Victoria, Tasmania, SA and Canberra). Throughout June I am constantly envious of our Queensland, Northern NSW, Northern Territory and West Australian members basking in the sunlight and even swimming.

Give More and Give to Community

And of course because it's June the donations are flooding into the National Giving Centre – Giving Money – Donations online through the facility at <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/donations>.

It is so exciting to see the build up of donations from Australians with even some international donations coming in – all individuals giving to the wonderful community groups listed on the website. I am passionate about more Australians giving more money and also including in their giving donations to some of the smaller community groups.

Have a look at the groups on the site. Of course these are only the first groups to get into donations online although the numbers are growing as we learn more about the experiences of what works for groups in terms of promoting and marketing the Our Community service. There is room for everybody – every community group should definitely sign up; it's free to community groups and donors alike (the only free donations online facility in Australia).

If we all join together there will be a revolution in giving - Australians as individuals will give more and will give to medium and small community groups as well as the great Australian icon charities. (See more on giving in the newsletter).

Let's all join together to make Tax Deductibility Fair

A major psychological hurdle to persuading Australians to give to medium, small and local community group is the chaos and unfairness with tax deductibility. While two-thirds of Australians don't even claim their deductions, donors still think that having tax deductibility is a sign that the community group is managed well and financially viable. Of course that is untrue; fraud is just as likely to occur in a group that has tax deductibility as it is in a group that doesn't - tax deductibility provides no protection for the donor.

The madness in the tax deductibility system of which groups get it and which groups are excluded is really a combination of Australia being back in the dark ages. We are still using the Elizabethan Poor Laws to define the groups that get tax deductibility and the groups that don't. This is very bad for everybody - it reinforces a charitable model that builds in the notion of the deserving and the grateful poor. As I have experienced in my own life, it is also awful if you're on the receiving end of that old-style notion of charity. It can be humiliating, undermining and it simply doesn't work to get people integrated into the community – open, accessible, welcoming community groups are there to provide everyone with a chance to join up and join in – shoulder to shoulder with everyone else.

The alternative way for some community groups to get tax deductibility is political influence. Anomalies abound; for example, a few community learning centres have somehow managed to get tax deductibility – most don't and can't get deductibility no matter how often they apply. Some self-help groups get it if local members help and others doing similar work can't get deductibility no matter how much they try.

If we want a strong community sector that really does build social capital, we must reform the whole area of tax deductibility as soon as possible - after endless enquires and reports, still not enough is happening even though one new category of DGR status has now been formed (see further down). Perhaps Peter Costello with his welcomed comments about the need to increase Australia's social capital will take this significant barrier on and sort it out soon.

Our Community is making a priority the campaign for tax deductibility to be available for all of the community groups that are contributing to the social development of Australia, similar to our work with public liability insurance. If you are interested to join with us let me know and watch this space.

Reconciliation in Practice

As well as the giving month, June is Reconciliation month and I had the privilege of speaking with Lowitja O'Donohue (for a copy of her speech go to www.flinders.edu.au/yunggorendi/ and Rick Farley (for a copy of his speech [click here](#)) at the Albury Reconciliation Day festival. It was great to be with over 100 people for the day, including the Mayor, learning from their first hand experience of the systemic lack of access and opportunity - from the earliest time when babies are born with inadequate ante and post natal care. There are some great employment-focused

projects under way in Albury led by the Aboriginal community and local government itself is a strong supporter with a trainee program (the incredible success in Moree gives such hope). The conclusion to the productive, creative day provided a vision that highlights the need for the whole of Albury/Wodonga (and every community) to be part of reconciliation and committed to tangible, practical reconciliation action.

Continuing on with the Theme of Communities in Control

Similarly, my meeting with the brilliant, inspiring Dave Glazebrook reinforced the extreme importance of local ownership, local control and local passion. He brought me up to date on the Visy Centre in Dandenong, a centre providing support – now including educational - to thousands of excluded young people.

The Visy Centre absolutely reflects best practice in business community partnerships. Visy supplied (and still does) money, in kind support and partnership led by Visy's Ian Allen. But the difference is that Visy is one of the few corporations that have allowed and even campaigned for local ownership and control to flourish. It is so tempting for business to think they know the answers and to pick up centralised templates and solutions and impose them on local communities. Visy Dandenong is completely different from the other Visy Centres. The latest Visy Centre created with, among others, the energy and vision of Frank McGuire, is in the City of Hume. This Visy Centre focuses on parents and infant welfare and is an IT hub providing skills and literacy for, among others, newly arrived migrants and refugees. Local community and local government are key to both initiatives and therefore both centres have in-built sustainability.

From Local to Super and Back Again

From community control to Women in Super- speaking at the gorgeous Windsor Hotel to a group of top women – all in financial management. As I was addressing them as their luncheon speaker, in my head I was rubbing my hands together thinking about what wonderful resources they would all be on boards and committees of management for community groups. The biggest challenge is to persuade top corporate types to go on the small and local community board, not just the bigger elite community organisations where people kill to get on the boards – from these women I got an excellent response.

RHONDA GALBALLY AO
Chief Executive Officer

[Back to Top](#)

2. Nominate your grassroots group for a National Volunteering Award.

All Volunteer organisations are being encouraged to take part in the National Australia Bank's National Volunteer awards in which Our Community is proud to be a partner.

This year the National has revamped the awards, offering more prizemoney and also increasing the number of categories for eligible community organisations. The awards recognise the spirit of volunteering and are designed to pay tribute to the work of volunteers over the past 12 months. In 2003 more than \$500,000 is available for community organisations.

The National's General Manager (Corporate Affairs) for Financial Services Australia, Mr Tim O'Leary, said the awards had been revamped to better "recognise and reward the volunteer groups across Australia that embody the spirit of volunteering."

Mr O'Leary said that since the program began in 1997, more than 13,500 groups have been nominated for the awards and more than \$1.5 million in prizemoney has been contributed to volunteer and community organisations. The increased prizemoney was important for community and grass roots groups but so too was the opportunity for groups to receive due recognition for the great work within the community, he said.

"What is really important is the recognition the groups receive as a result of the awards and the increase in self esteem in the volunteers themselves. A lot of their hard work is unheralded and unseen and is done behind the scenes," Mr O'Leary said.

"What this awards program does is highlight and recognise that good work of so many grass roots groups and, as a result, they receive additional recognition at a state and national level but also in their own communities. The additional attention from local councils, parliamentarians and the communities is also important."

To be eligible for any of the following categories, your group must be a community based not-for-profit organisation. The categories are:

- **Art and Culture:** Organisations involved in artistic and cultural activities to promote community expression and/or development of their culture. All forms of artistic endeavour are eligible including visual arts and crafts, dance, theatre, literature, music and new media.
- **Children and Families:** Organisations that undertake activities which specifically support the needs of children or families. Activities include advancement of child development and wellbeing, strengthening of family relationships, development of family support networks and family-focused projects.
- **Community Service and Development:** Organisations responsive to community needs. Activities include advocacy, community awareness programs and services, and development of community support structures.
- **Education, Training and Youth Development:** Organisations involved in the education and training of all members of our community from childhood to old age. Youth development activities will focus on supporting young people aged 16-24 to maximise their potential and may include activities such as education, training, personal development and peer support.
- **Emergency and Safety:** Organisations involved in community safety and emergency situations. All forms of rescue, firefighting, life-saving, emergency response, support services and safety initiatives are eligible.
- **Environment, Conservation, Heritage and Animal Welfare:** Organisations who contribute to the protection and preservation of Australia's environment and heritage or promote and protect animal welfare. Activities include flora, fauna and reserve conservation, land management, public advocacy, education, training, preservation programs, education on animal care, protection of stray and injured animals, species rejuvenation and advocacy for animal welfare.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Organisations involved with attaining the highest possible level of health and wellbeing for all people. Activities include health and support services, health research, public health practices and the promotion of mental and emotional wellbeing through specific strategies or programs.
- **Rural and Regional Development:** Organisations that promote and deliver services for the benefit of improving rural and regional areas. Activities include those relating to issues which impact particularly on rural and regional communities, such as drought, salinity, geographic isolation, population migration and regional economic and social development groups.
- **Sport and Recreation:** Organisations and clubs involved with sport, fitness, outdoor and community recreation. This can include participation, coaching, training, education and disability activities.

There will be 63 State and Territory winners who will each receive \$7000 while the nine national category winners will each receive \$3000.

All 180 groups across Australia will be short-listed and will all be eligible for a new category of People's Choice awards. The nine groups voted the People's Choice Award winners will receive \$2500 while one group will be nominated from the short-listed 180 groups to receive another new award, the National Spirit of Volunteering Award which will see a further \$1400 go to the successful group. All prizemoney is to be spent by the organisation on their activities.

"We think it's important to support volunteering. We have been part and parcel of the community for well over 100 years, many of our employees are regular and enthusiastic volunteers themselves and we believe this is one way the National can recognise and reward volunteer groups and encourage the spirit of volunteering in Australia," Mr O'Leary said.

He encouraged groups to nominate. Groups wanting the nomination forms can call the hotline on **1800 807 121** or visit www.national.com.au.

[**Back to Top**](#)

3. Ensure your Annual Report satisfies all your stakeholders - use this ICAA checklist.

As the end of the financial year draws near, we have included a terrific checklist produced by the **Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia** (ICAA) to try and help community organisations compile an annual report that better reflects their activities.

A report by the ICAA recently found that while meeting the requirements imposed by Federal and State legislation, a detailed review of a number of non-profit annual reports failed to satisfy the needs of two of their key stakeholder groups, the donor and the funding provider.

According to the ICAA's spokesman, Stewart Leslie, non-profit groups needed to tell their story more effectively and to go further than they are legally required in preparing their reports. "NFPs (Not-for-profits) need to better tell the story of their organisation using a combination of financial, non-financial and narrative in the one report," Mr Leslie

said.

“Annual and Financial reports need to explain what the NFP is trying to do, how it is going about it, whether it has achieved its objectives during the year and its plans for the future. It should also help the reader understand the organisational structure and activities of the NFP.”

He said many of the non profit annual reports they reviewed were more than 40 pages long but few used a highlights page to summarise the organisation's significant events and achievements.

The **ICAA checklist**, prepared by members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, suggests non-profits can improve their annual report by ensuring their group:

- explains what the NFP is trying to do;
- explains how the NFP is going about it;
- show whether the NFP has achieved its objectives during the year;
- explain the NFPs plans for the future; and
- help the reader of the report understand the organisational structures and activities of the NFP.

While the checklist refers to certain financial and non-financial reporting issues, it should not be considered as a complete guide to NFP reporting. It merely highlights issues noted during the ICAA review that it believes should be considered by NFPs when they are preparing their report for 2003. The ICAA strongly encourage the user of the checklist to discuss any issues arising from its completion with their own auditors.

Checklist for improving Not For Profit reporting

An overview of our reporting

- Do we have separate Annual and Financial Reports?
- Are we able to prepare Concise Financial Statements, as permitted by the Corporations Act?
- Should the report we send to our stakeholders combine the Annual and Financial Reports?
- Does our Annual Report include a highlights page?
- Do we make enough use of graphics to explain our activities?
- If our auditors' report has been qualified, do we understand the basis of the qualification and the reasons why the auditor has reached the opinion expressed in the audit report?
- Do we adequately acknowledge the contribution of our volunteers?
- Do we bring all grant revenue to account as income in the year it is received?
- Are the liabilities we recognise for unspent grants only for grants where we have failed to meet specific conditions attaching to the grant and the unspent amount must be repaid?
- Do we properly disclose situations where we are economically dependent on grants to enable us to carry out our activities?

Part 1 – What we are trying to do

1.1 In the past we have included our Mission Statement in our Annual report. Does it provide the reader of our Annual Report with a clear understanding of what we are trying to do?

1.2 Does our Annual Report include a clear statement of the objectives of our organisation? What is the need we are serving and how are we going about it?

1.3 Is the statement of objectives we have included in our Annual Report the same as that we have on our website?

Part 2 – How we are going about it

Does the Annual Report:

2.1 Include a clear statement as to how we go about obtaining the funds we need to achieve our objectives?

2.2 Provide a clear description of the activities we undertake to achieve our objectives?

2.3 Clearly explain how we work with other organisations to achieve our objectives? For example, do we explain:

- where we are dependent upon other organisations for funding
- where our policies are set by or aligned with those of other organisations
- where we provide funds to other organisations so they can carry out their activities

2.4 Disclose the results of each of the segments in which we operate? That is, have we considered including disclosures to comply with Accounting Standards, AASB 1005, Segment Reporting?

2.5 Dissect our revenue, expenses, result, assets and liabilities to enable us to report the following segments:

- generating funds – this may be through appeals, commercial activities or bequests
- administering funds – the management and administration activities of the NFP
- the expending of funds on the purposes for which the NFP was established.

Part 3 – What we have achieved during the year

Does the Annual Report:

3.1 Provide an analysis of our revenue?

3.2 Provide an analysis of our expenditure?

3.3 Provide comparative data regarding our revenue and expenditure?

3.4 Explain trends in our revenues?

3.5 Explain trends in our expenditures, including an explanation of the main influences on the costs of our activities?

3.6 Explain significant movements in our statement of financial position?

3.7 Explain significant changes in cash flows?

3.8 Explain how we have financed significant capital expenditure programs?

3.9 Include Process KPIs that measure the effectiveness of our activities? For example:

- costs of fundraising as a percentage of gross income from fundraising
- net surplus from fundraising as a percentage of gross income from fundraising
- cost of the services we provide as a percentage of total costs incurred
- cost of services provided as a percentage of total funds received
- appropriate measures for our commercial activities such as gross profit, return on sales and return on assets employed

3.9 Include Process KPIs that measure the effectiveness of our activities? For example:

- the number of hours contributed by our volunteers
- the number of staff we employ and the activities they are engaged in

Part 3 – What we have achieved during the year

Does the Annual Report:

3.10 Include Impact KPIs that measure the effectiveness of the “delivery” aspects of our activities? For example:

- the number of meals provided
- the number of people assisted or treated
- the proportion of people suffering from an affliction we have assisted
- the success of research funded by grants we have provided
- the awareness of our organisation within the community we serve
- the changes to government policy that can be directly attributed to our activities
- the countries in which our services are provided
- the number of volunteers we have placed
- the number of requests for information we have received
- the number of information packs we have provided

Part 4 – Explaining our plans for the future

Does the Annual Report include:

4.1 Details of events since the end of the year that impact on our activities?

4.2 An explanation of our plans for the future, including where necessary or appropriate:

- our anticipated or targeted revenue raisings
- our projected process KPIs
- our projected impact KPIs
- any proposed new activities and the impact they will have on our financial position and cash flows

Part 5 – Understanding our organisational structure and activities

Does the Annual Report explain:

- 5.1 The legal form of our organisation?
- 5.2 The composition of our Board or Governing Committee, including their qualifications and experience?
- 5.3 How the members of our Board or Governing Committee are appointed to that position?
- 5.4 The specific roles of the members of our Board or Governing Committee?
- 5.5 The induction process for new Board or Committee members?
- 5.6 How decisions are made at meetings of the Board or Committee?
- 5.7 The constraints under which the Board or Committee operates (for example; our ethical framework, situations where the Board is expected to obtain independent advice, how the Board deals with conflict of interest)?
- 5.8 The roles of any Board committees or sub-committees such as Audit or Marketing?
- 5.9 The relationship we have with our State based organisations or branches that support our activities, including
 - State or branch representatives on the Board
 - the degree of autonomy granted to the State or branch, particularly in relation to fundraising and the utilisation of funds?

5.10 Our investment policies and how they are enacted?

Part 5 – Understanding our organisational structure and activities

Does the Annual Report explain:

- 5.11 The approach we take to actively identify, analyse, assess, prioritise, treat and monitor the risks we face in carrying on our activities?
- 5.12 The process we use to decide upon the awarding of a grant?

The ICAA has the formatted downloadable checklist (with tick boxes) available on its site for any groups wanting to download and print out as a word document. It is a great prompt for all groups and the ICAA should be applauded for this initiative. You can find the checklist at

http://www.icaa.org.au/upload/download/Checklist_NotForProfit_reporting.doc

[Back to Top](#)

4. Push for Australians to establish a giving plan to expand their support of community groups.

We recently went out with a media release encouraging people to expand their giving in the final days of the financial year while thinking more about the community organisations to consider establishing a giving plan (see [tips on giving wisely](#)).

The interest from publicity has provided another run of online donations and the June figure will now be the highest ever recorded for a single month, surpassing the same month last year which was the previous record. It is a big stride forward for those groups who ran mid-year appeals utilising the [National Community Giving Centre](#), sponsored by the National Australia Bank. Given June last year was easily the previously best month, it is a big stride forward for our groups, particularly those organisations that have run their own mid-year appeal.

Here is the copy of the release that was sent out to Australian media. It includes a number of the statistics and also the trends that we have identified over the past couple of years of running the free online donations service.

What we have also found is that we are now starting to build a solid database of case studies of online appeals and how and why they have worked - both from efforts of the bigger appeals and also some of the smaller organisations who have managed to use the power of words and existing networks to make their online component work.

For those interested, this is the message that went out:

AUSTRALIANS are being encouraged to establish an annual giving plan to better target their donations and learn more about the community organisations seeking their support.

The end of the financial year is traditionally one of the strongest giving periods for donations to Australian community organisations and thousands of groups rely heavily on their mid-year appeals to support their activities throughout the rest of the year.

It is important that Australians become better informed about the community groups running appeals and their activities but it was also important for people to review whether they could afford to give more, said Dr Rhonda Galbally AO, the CEO of www.ourcommunity.com.au, which runs Australia's only free online donation service.

Dr Galbally said if many groups didn't have a strong mid-year boost, it would impact on their ability to provide for the community during the coming year, whether that was providing care for the homeless, running a soup kitchen, providing sporting opportunities for our children or any of the many and varied community activities.

"It is a critical time for donations. Many groups rely on the money raised in this small window around Tax time to support their ongoing work," Dr Galbally said. "Any drop-off now will definitely have an impact on the community later in the year."

Dr Galbally said establishing an annual giving plan meant donors could identify the priorities and interest areas they wanted to support and then identify suitable community groups that matched those priorities or that made a difference to their family, friends or local community.

"People don't want to just give and be done with it and the reality is that community groups don't just want a one-off donation. They want an ongoing relationship where they can work together with donors and supporters to build a stronger community," Dr Galbally said.

Dr Galbally said people were increasingly using the Internet to find out more about groups they wanted to donate to. She said more than a quarter of a million dollars had now been donated through ourcommunity's **National Community Giving Centre**, the free online donation facility sponsored by the National Australia Bank.

"As people have become more comfortable with securely and safely banking, buying and paying bills online, they are also donating online in greater numbers," she said.

Some results of online giving through the www.ourcommunity.com.au service:

- Over 235 separate community appeals have been listed since the service opened.
- Over \$255,000 has been donated online to a variety of community groups.
- Donations in the 12 months to May 31 jumped 196 per cent over the previous year.
- The average donation rose to \$118 - up from \$99 in May 2002.
- The highest donation recorded has been \$5000, the minimum is \$5.
- The number of individual donations rose by 149 per cent in the year to May 2003.
- Groups have found a significant percentage of donors giving online are "new" donors who had not been found through traditional means.
- A new group of "trawler" donors has emerged. They are regular visitors to the [ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) site who "trawl" through the listed appeals, donating to a number of different appeals on each visit.
- Groups generally find the level of average online donation is much higher than that given through traditional methods.

Dr Galbally said the giving facility at the **National Community Giving Centre** had recently been revamped so that as well as donating online people could also access information on how they could donate by fax, mail or phone. Tips to help people establish their own Giving Plan had also been loaded onto the site.

Facilities to encourage people to donate time through volunteering, donate blood, to remember groups in their will and donate their unwanted computers had also been established recently to assist people to help groups in as many ways as possible.

People wanting to find groups seeking assistance can visit www.ourcommunity.com.au/donations or look up one of the thousands of worthwhile groups operating in their own neighbourhood.

[Back to Top](#)

5. Capacity for groups to now take monthly credit card payments through the National Community Giving Centre.

Groups listing their appeals through the National Community Giving Centre now have the ability to sign up donors to provide monthly credit card payments rather than a one-off donation.

The latest changes to the National Community Giving Centre give donors the choice of making either a single one-off payment or nominating to have monthly credit card deductions. The functionality has only been available for just over a week and already we have had pledges totalling over \$5000 for the next financial year.

Not only does it increase the amount that people are prepared to give but it also ensures the community groups nominated have a regular income stream that we think will continue to grow as more donors visit the site and build relationships with their preferred community organisations. Donors can also nominate whether the online donations continues for the next 12 months or goes on indefinitely.

We have also expanded other functions on the free online donations service to provide donors with other options as well as donating online.

So now each appeal now listed on the National Community Giving Centre will have their own page which features:

- A direct online donations facility so that people can donate immediately through the safe and secure online service.
- The ability to sign up for monthly credit card payments.
- A customised donations form that has the name, address and details of the appeal automatically filled out which can be downloaded and either faxed or mailed.
- The phone number of the organisation so that people preferring to donate over the phone can do so without seeking the information elsewhere.
- A customised bequest form that includes the name of organisation, address and Australian Business Number (ABN) so that people can download and pass onto their legal adviser should they want to add to their will.

The changes we have made have now turned the National Community Giving Centre from a purely online donation site to a site where people can come and decide the manner in which they will give, albeit we think the majority of online visitors will continue to give online.

For those community organisations who want information on establishing their free online donations page through the National Community Giving Centre, you can contact Kate Caldecott at katec@ourcommunity.com.au or you can download the information from the website by [clicking here](#).

And as we mentioned we also have a draft Help Sheet with some tips on promoting your online donations service which we are refining but you can receive it now by emailing Kate Caldecott at katec@ourcommunity.com.au. [Back to Top](#)

6. Media - Discovering the Habits of highly-effective non-profit media spokespeople.

What are some of the habits that set apart the good non-profit or community operator from the person who never gets a run?

Brett de Hoedt, broadcaster, writer, public relations specialist and director of [Hootville Communications](#) continues his occasional series of media help sheets and suggests some of the little things that people can do to increase their chances of getting their story a run in the newspapers, or on radio and television. He writes:

Steven Covey, author of 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People' divides all human activity into four categories.

Q1 Important & Urgent: financial, work & health crises

Q2 Important & Non-Urgent: education, health, relationships, bridge building, planning

Q3 Unimportant & Urgent: many of the phone calls we answer and meetings we attend

Q4 Unimportant & Non-Urgent: TV, couch potato-ing, web cruising, sleeping in

He argues that time spent on Q2 is the best investment and for what it is worth I agree. Time spent on Q2 usually avoids having to spend time in Q1 and is far more rewarding than Q3 and Q4.

Q2 communication activities include:

Filing 1: Keep a file or scrapbook of articles relevant to your business / industry. Scan it for the journalists who cover your ground. Can you detect their opinions? Who do they ask for comment? Who is saying what?

Filing 2: Keep a file or scrapbook of regular features or columns in publications into which you could slot your people. These are the Q and A columns, the How I Got My First Big Break features, My House, My favourite things, A week in the Life of etc etc. On radio they are the regular interviews (eg: a Conversation Hour). Along with the columns, find and store the contact details. The best way to do this is buy all the papers for a week. Take a scalpel in one hand and start turning the pages with the other, cutting out anything you fancy. Then get Clagging. Likewise with magazines and industry journals.

Building Your Email List: Stephen Mayne of crikey.com.au devotes 80% of his energy to his email list. A regular email is active, a website passive. Keep your emails regular but not too frequent. Make them a utility with a key piece of information each time. Contain something funny. Invite recipients to pass it on but give them a chance to unsubscribe if they wish.

Building Your Media Relationships: Working from your first file, make a list of the journos you need to know. Email them about something they've written, offer a meeting / briefing and suggest that your organisation be thought of for future articles. It beats the first they hear of you being: "Hi, I'm just wondering if you've got our press release..."

Planning Your Communications: What annual events can you hijack? (Have a think about the recent Mother's Day coverage and the groups that piggybacked on the increased attention on mothers - a breast cancer research appeal, the QUIT anti-smoking campaign with figures on smoking mums and a campaign to have estranged kids call home.) What media will you court this year? What coverage will your big annual event garner? Plan it. Use other events to leverage your coverage.

Getting Savvy: Whether it's training for your spokesperson or your communications person, do it now. It will change the mindset of your organisation in relation to media. To use another Covey cliché, you'll become pro-active, more open to opportunities and better able to deal with disaster.

More Help Sheets on media and marketing can be found in the [Community Management Centre](#). We also run regular media and marketing articles in the monthly Raising Funds newsletter. [Click here](#) for details if you are not receiving Raising Funds.

Brett de Hoedt is the Director of [Hootville Communications](#).

[Back to Top](#)

7. Do you know what tax concessions you are entitled to?

All Treasurers, office bearers and employees involved in the administration of non-profit organisations should be aware that the Australian Tax Office has launched a new series of non-profit publications to replace the old CharityPack, GiftPack and ClubPack.

The packs have been changed to make more user-friendly and updated to include changes to legislation and tax liabilities and deductions. The new packs are:

1. Tax basics for non-profit organisations (NAT 7966) is for all non-profit organisations. This publication:

- provides an overview of tax obligations and concessions
- helps you identify which taxes affect your organisation, including income tax, fringe benefits tax, goods and services tax, and pay as you go, and explains where you can find more detailed information.

In addition to highlighting the more prominent taxation obligations, it includes:

- A list of tax concessions applicable to the various types of non-profit organisations
- An explanation of how organisations can keep their registration details with the Tax Office up to date
- Discussion on capital gains, consolidations and refund of imputation credits
- A description of FBT concessions for public benevolent institutions and religious institutions
- Employer related information on superannuation guarantee, salary sacrifice and volunteers
- A list of state and territory government contacts for public collections and for the various offices of state revenue
- Record keeping guidelines and information for quoting tax file numbers on bank accounts and for proving eligibility for discounts offered to non-profit organisations by suppliers.

2. Income tax guide for non-profit organisations (NAT 7967) helps you work out if your organisation is exempt from income tax, explains the endorsement process for charities, and provides information about income tax for non-profit organisations that are not exempt.

This new publication combines significant information from the publications CharityPack and ClubPack, which were produced in 2000. It also updates these publications to include legislative changes and to advise you of further proposed changes to the law. It has been restructured to assist the reader to more easily identify their organisation's income tax status.

3. GiftPack for deductible gift recipients & donors (NAT 3132) explains who can receive tax deductible gifts and the types of gifts that are tax deductible, as well as explaining how donors can claim tax deductions for their gifts. This publication is an update of GiftPack and includes text on the following new measures:

- Prescribed private funds
- Health promotion charities
- Gifts of property valued by the Tax Office at more than \$5,000
- Spreading tax deductions for certain gifts over a period of up to 5 years
- Workplace giving, and
- Conservation covenants

Both **GiftPack for deductible gift recipients & donors** and **Income tax guide for non-profit organisations** have a 'What's New' section which advises of recent legislative and administrative changes that have been incorporated into the updated publications. There is also a 'Proposed measures' section which summarises recent media releases in which the government has announced its intention to introduce new legislation affecting deductible gift recipients, tax deductible gifts, charities and other matters specific to non-profit organisations.

The new guides incorporate feedback from users of the non-profit section of www.ato.gov.au, community groups attending Tax seminars and workshops and testing of the previous packs by the Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies, Queensland University of Technology, led by Professor Myles McGregor-Lowndes.

Tax basics for non-profit organisations is to be mailed to organisations that currently have a registration with the Tax Office including those that have either an ABN or TFN. Those seeking to obtain printed copies of these publications can phone **1300 720 092** and quote the NAT number (for example, NAT 7967 for Income tax guide for non-profit organisations) or write to the ATO at GPO Box 9935 in your capital city.

Non-profit groups can also keep up-to-date on key tax issues affecting the non-profit sector by signing up for free email updates through www.ato.gov.au.

And while we are on the subject of tax deductibility.....

If you are a non-profit group and your main area of concern or operation is in promoting the prevention or control of harmful behaviour, then the legislation has just been changed to make it easier for you to gain Deductible Gift Recipient status.

Late last month, changes to legislation brought about by the Report of the inquiry into the definition of charities and related organisations created a new type of deductible gift recipient, Harm Prevention Charities.

The amendments can be found in Taxation Laws Amendment Bill (No. 6) 2003 and you can view the Bill and Explanatory Memorandum at the Parliament House website at www.aph.gov.au

What are Harm Prevention Charities? Harm Prevention Charities are charitable institutions with the principal activity of promoting the prevention or the control of behaviour that is harmful or abusive to humans. For the purpose of Harm Prevention Charities, behaviour that is harmful or abusive means one or more of the following:

- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- physical abuse;
- suicide;
- self-harm;
- substance abuse; and
- harmful gambling.

If your organisation fits into that area then you need to call the Tax Office on the above numbers or contact a legal adviser now.

[Back to Top](#)

8. Another reason why advocacy is such an important part of what community groups do.

One of the issues that came out of the **Communities in Control conference** and an issue that has been mentioned a number of times before in this newsletter is the importance of advocacy and why Governments need a strong, active advocacy sector even when it sometimes causes a little bit of pain.

It is not just an Australian issue where many groups that had strong policies of advocacy have been overlooked for funding or had their funding stream stopped. It is an issue for Governments across the world where there will always be a tendency to want people to think like you do - and to be quiet if they don't.

Some people may wonder why the importance of advocacy is an issue that often gets a run in Our Community Matters, but it is an issue that Rhonda Galbally feels is strongly linked to the role of community groups and what they do.

Or as Sir Gustav Nossal put it in his speech to the Communities in Control conference:

"Strong community leadership is about creating a healthy debate when people don't realise there is anything to argue over. It can be about causing ripples when people want a smooth pond. Sometimes it's loud. Sometimes it's heated and sometimes it makes the public feel uncomfortable, it makes policymakers feel uncomfortable and especially makes Governments feel uncomfortable.

"So it's all about engineering a debate where people are vehemently opposed to your message. But just by having the debate you have the opportunity to break down all the arguments until - in time - your position gets to be seen not as radical but as common sense and one that enjoys the support of a majority of people."

The reason we mention it is a strong message Rhonda spotted on the regular e-newsletter provided by Non Profit Quarterly, a US resource for non-profit organisations where they mounted a very strong argument as to why advocacy is so important and why it can't be separated from the other important roles of a community organisation.

Here is the letter from the Non Profit Quarterly's Editor-in-Chief Ruth McCambridge which has been reprinted with her approval.

NONPROFIT QUARTERLY E-NEWSLETTER

Featuring Innovative Thinking in the Nonprofit Sector =====

May/June 2003, Issue 23

"Dear Colleagues:

"This morning, I heard that the successful 38-year-old network of Head Start programs, which the current administration is trying to creatively dismantle, has been warned to shut up about it.

"In a May 8 letter, Windy Hill, the Associate Commissioner of the Head Start Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, attempted to intimidate Head Start staff and parents by incorrectly stating that any lobbying or advocacy that they might engage in would violate conditions of their funding and national law.

"I hate to say I told you so, but in our March e-Newsletter, I expressed alarm about the erosion of our civil rights and liberties.

"A few of our readers were unhappy about this. Some even accused us of being unpatriotic. One gentleman suggested that I "stick to my knitting," by which he meant the narrower details of "nonprofit management" issues.

"Well, we think the protection of civil liberties is our "knitting," and the Head Start story is a case in point. It's a particularly poignant case because of the deep principles of community participation and activism that Head Start embodies.

"Our civil liberties are what allow us to assemble, and to form opinions about and take action on all of the issues that affect our lives. And the basic norm of democracy is that individuals should have equal chances to influence those collective decisions that affect them.

"Nonprofits have an important role in ensuring participation, and should provide the venue for participation-- constantly enlivening our national fabric of multiple dialogues, interest groups and communities. Whether we pursue the local advancement of the arts of Southeast Asia, provide for the safety of abused women, advocate for clean air or, like Head Start, provide early education in economically, geographically and culturally marginalized communities, we help to shape and add to the texture of life. We also attend to equity of access to the things that allow us to participate fully in life, things like education, food, health care and affordable, decent housing.

"A healthy democracy requires three legs. The first is a government sector largely organized around majority opinion, but sensitive to the needs of minorities. The second is a market sector, largely organized around

production and profit. And finally, a healthy democracy has a third sector driven largely by the free association of people looking, among other things, to protect the interests of those whose voices or interests are not being well represented or protected in the market or government or both.

"Thus, nonprofits play an important balancing role. Our ability to associate as organized power groups, and to develop, adopt and speak opinions sometimes oppositional to the status quo, are protected by the rights provided by the Constitution...our civil liberties.

"Since the inception of this sector, there has been a crucible of core values that too often remain unspoken-- values like engagement, inclusion, equity and freedom of expression. My assumption has always been that all of these are the guarantors of democracy, and I also associate this sector with a constant drive for a more just society. The Nonprofit Quarterly strives to bring these same values into discussions about management, because a powerful sector, like a powerful organisation, is one that organizes and manages itself towards a purpose.

"In the same way we wouldn't expect the Harvard Business Review to ignore the profit-making purpose of the business sector, we can't ignore the purpose of this sector, which, simply put, is the engagement of ordinary people in public life. And in the same way that the business sector guards against contextual restraints, so should we.

"When the Nonprofit Quarterly promotes advocacy as a core competency, or pushes nonprofit managers to shift accountability streams to ensure the constituents play a role in decision- making and direction-setting, we don't do so in a vacuum. These functions are central to our ability to act powerfully as the third leg of our teetering stool of democracy.

"As always,
"Ruth"

Very little has been changed in this society without people with the courage to speak out and say what they think and to contribute to debate. Everything should be done to continue that even if it does cause funding agencies or grantmakers a bit of discomfort. Even in the community sector there is something in the saying: No pain - No gain.

[Back to Top](#)

9. Community briefs - bits and pieces from the community sector

Painting a picture of the Australian scene.

Recently we saw the release of the Australian Social Trends, 2003 report which was compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and which provides some new insights into the complex nature of Australia's changing society.

The analysis is based on the most recent ABS data, as well as data from other sources and looked at a number of different subject areas to try and create a snapshot of the community.

We have included some of the more general findings that might be of interest to community organisations. in general and some of those working in the area.

Rural and regional themes

- Between 1991 and 2001, the fastest population growth was in major cities (13%) and in inner regional areas (14%), while the growth in more remote areas was less than 5%.
- Between 1986 and 2001, farming families decreased by 22%, from 145,000 to 112,800.
- Young people are one of the most mobile groups in the population. In the five years to August 2001, half of all people aged 15-24 years moved residence. Almost three times as many young people left country areas than arrived in these areas (226 net departures per 1,000 young people). Nearly two thirds of the net outflow of these young people was to capital cities.
- School completion rates and attendance at secondary school declined with increasing remoteness. In major cities, 82% of males aged 16 years, and 87% of females aged 16 years were attending a secondary school, while only 38% of males, and 45% of females in this age group in very remote areas were attending a secondary school.
- In 2001, 93,000 people lived in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia, with most of these communities having access to essential services. However, of the larger remote

communities, 68% had bore water as the main source of drinking water, 85% had experienced electricity interruptions, and 49% had experienced sewage system faults in the previous year.

Families and communities themes

- While couple families with children remain the most common type of family in Australia, between 1986 and 2001, one-parent families increased by 53%, while couple families with children increased by only 3%.
- In 1999, just over half (53%) of all families with young children and at least one parent employed used some form of flexible working arrangement, such as flexible working hours or permanent part-time work, to care for children. In 1999, one-parent families where the parent was employed were the most likely to make use of formal child care.
- In the past two decades, average working hours of full-time workers increased from 42 hours per week in 1982 to 44 hours per week in 2002. This largely reflects an increase in the proportion of full-time workers working between 50 and 59 hours per week - up from 10% in 1982 to 16% in 2002.
- In 2001-02 there were 30,500 substantiated reports of child neglect or abuse made to state or territory community service departments.
- Between 1989-90 and 2001, the proportion of Australian adults who smoked declined. At the same time, adults increased the amount of deliberate exercise they undertook. However, despite the rise in deliberate physical activity, the adult population on average became more overweight or obese. In 2001, 24% of the adult population were current smokers, 32% were physically inactive, and 46% were overweight or obese.
- Between 1991 and 2001, higher density dwellings increased by 37%, compared with an 18% increase in separate houses.
- In 2001, young adults aged 15-24 years experienced the highest levels of crime victimisation across a range of offence categories, including homicide, assault, sexual assault and robbery. Older Australians aged 65 years and over experienced the lowest. However, older people are more likely than young people to report feeling unsafe in a variety of situations.

More detail from the articles which appear in Australian Social Trends, 2003 (cat. no. 4102.0) is available in the "Australia Now" section on the www.abs.gov.au site

Help make an international statement on the information Society and how it affects non-profit groups.

The Centre for Community Networking Research at Monash University is seeking the support of community organisations in contributing to an official statement for the World Summit on the Information Society.

The UN summit on the information age is being held in December this year and in Tunisia in 2005 and is aiming to develop a statement on the information society that encompasses Government, business and "civil society". While the Australian Government is developing a position, the Centre for Community Networking Research has been asked to put together a statement on behalf of Australia's civil society or community sector.

Groups in many countries are developing statements about the effects of electronic communications and according to Larry Stillman from the Centre, the summit is an opportunity to develop a statement that could influence an outcome at the highest international political levels, policies about global communications networks and the information society. It also sets in place a statement relevant to the situation in this country.

A consultation process has already begun but the Centre would like to hear from more community organisations for their experiences, views and case studies on a number of issues that were identified by the working party.

Key issues and Elements for the Statement.

- **What is Civil Society?:** Civil society needs to engage effectively with the government and private or business sectors on what ICT is/means/does. The very notion of 'civil society', which is long-standing in Europe, is untested in this country and needs clarification.
- **Case Studies:** Rather than being an abstract document, the statement needs some clear examples & case studies to make points clear.
- **Democratic plurality:** The statement should reflect the 'democratic plurality' of Australia, including indigenous and multicultural diversity
- **Engagement:** The Statement should aspire to support an engaged and informed society (aware of benefits of ICTs, empowered)

- **Values and Principles:** A statement that emphasizes the capacity of groups in civil society to achieve their own goals facilitated by information and communications technology (ICT) in accordance with the values and principles of:
 - adaptability
 - continuity of discourse
 - inclusivity
 - equity
 - accessibility/capability/ability
 - plurality of viewpoints/diversity
 - interoperability (connectivity) openness
 - knowledge sharing
 - In addition, there is a diversity of viewpoints on how to use ICT for social good, and these need to be considered reflectively.
- **Transformative effects of Information and Communications Technologies:** Civil society needs to be able to control the transformative effects of ICT, not necessarily through market-force means. There needs to be a better means of discovering enabling mechanisms which government, civil society, and business (as three broad groupings in society) can use ICTs for social good.
- **Spatial issues in the region:** Australia (and other countries in the region) are strongly effected by spatial isolation. These are real effects of our history and ICTs provide only part of the solution to bridging geographic, cultural, political, and other isolation.

For those wanting to join the discussion they can visit the Centre's site at www.ccnr.net/wsis/ or contact Larry Stillman at the Centre on larrys@vicnet.net.au.

The process and the involvement of the Centre for Community Networking Research and the COIN Internet Academy at Central Queensland University is being supported by the Federal Government through the National Office of the Information Economy (NOIE).

Communities in Control conference video now available.

To all those who ordered the Communities in Control conference video, you should now have received the two-video pack which features the presentations of all the keynote speakers including:

For those people who were not at the conference the speakers covered in the video pack are:

- **EMERITUS PROFESSOR LEN SYME**, School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley.
- **PROFESSOR LISA BERKMAN**, Professor of Public Policy and Epidemiology and Chair of the Department of Health and Social Behavior at Harvard School of Public Health.
- **Mr SAM LIPSKI AM**, Chief Executive Officer, The Pratt Foundation.
- **The Hon. AMANDA VANSTONE**, Federal Minister for Family and Community Services
- **The Hon JOHN THWAITES**, Victorian Deputy Premier and Minister for Victorian Communities.
- **PROFESSOR FIONA STANLEY, AC**, the 2003 Australian of the Year and CEO, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.
- **SIR GUSTAV NOSSAL AC, CBE**, one of Australia's most eminent community leaders, a former Australian of the Year, and world-renowned authority on immunisation and health.
- **The Hon. BRONWYN PIKE**, Victorian Minister for Health
- **STEPHEN MAYNE**, Founder crikey.com.au

The cost of the video is **\$62 plus \$6.50 for postage and handling (a total of \$68.50)**. There has also been an incredible response to the 500-word summaries that are now loaded on the site as well as the speeches and powerpoint presentations where they have been made available.

To order the Communities in Control video, access the summaries or to download or print out speeches, visit the Communities in Control home page or [click here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

10. Products and Services

To all those who have received a copy of OC Matters passed on by one of our members and are unsure of our services, here is some basic information. We provide three main newsletters designed to assist community, education and non-profit groups:

The Easy Grants newsletter and Education Service provides a monthly summary of all grants available in your state/territory - philanthropic, corporate, state, and federal government. Click on <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/newsletter/1/sample.pdf> for a recent sample of an Easy Grants newsletter - only \$45 a year (community group price) which includes year-round access to search our extensive grants database. To subscribe visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/grant_main.jsp

The Raising Funds newsletter provides a monthly resource on the latest fund-raising tools and techniques from running special events to innovative ideas to find money. A sample of the Raising Funds newsletter - which costs just \$45 per year (community group price) for 12 monthly issues can be found by clicking <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/newsletter/4/sample.pdf>. To subscribe visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/fundraising_main.jsp.

The Scholarship Alert newsletter provides a monthly summary of all scholarships, awards and fellowships in your state/territory. Click on <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/newsletter/3/sample.pdf> for a recent sample newsletter. Scholarship Alert costs just \$45 (community group price) for 12 monthly issues plus year-round access to search our extensive scholarships database. To subscribe visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/scholarship_main.jsp.

The Busigrants newsletter is a perfect tool for businesses and social enterprises looking to access the hundreds of millions of dollars in business grants available to emerging and expanding businesses. The monthly Busigrants newsletter contains a summary of Federal and State Government grants funding programs as well as relevant industry awards. Perfect for any enterprise looking for assistance to expand markets or to develop new goods and services. Busigrants costs just \$195 for 12 monthly issues delivered direct to your computer screen. To view a sample of Busigrants lick on <http://www.busigrants.com.au/busigrants/sample.jsp> or to subscribe click on <https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/busigrants/sub.jsp>.

The **Australian Best Practice Grantmaking Quarterly Newsletter** has been developed for grantmakers at all levels - Federal, State and local Government, philanthropic and corporate foundations and providers of scholarships. Highlighting issues and best practice examples across the grantmaking process from selection, administration, evaluations and accountability to marketing and using technology, this innovative and economical resource is essential for every government agency, philanthropic organisation or Private grantmaker. For subscription details and a summary of the first newsletter click on http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/article/view_news.do?articleid=381.

To subscribe to any of these newsletters Click here or e-mail info@ourcommunity.com.au or call us on (03) 9320 6800.

And don't forget our series of low-cost guidebooks, including:

How To: Find Money Fast - 50 Great Ideas to raise up to \$5000. This popular and practical guide gives you 50 ideas to raise money as well as providing handy advice on staging special events and setting up your own fundraising strategy. Great ideas and Great value. For more information on **How To: Find Money Fast - 50 Great Ideas to raise up to \$5000** visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=220

You can also purchase **How to win a Philanthropic Grant.**

For more information visit

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=56

ourcommunity.com.au also offers a free online donations and a free online volunteer service. For details visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving/giving_main.jsp

As mentioned earlier, www.ourcommunity.com.au has formed an alliance with National Australia Bank to introduce the first suite of tailored financial products for community groups. To find out more visit the Community Financial

Centre at http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/financial/financial_main.jsp. The Financial Centre contains details of the National's community accounts as well as Help Sheets on reducing fees.

A recent addition to www.ourcommunity.com.au is the National Insurance Centre where we have Help Sheets on reducing risk and the latest news on the insurance issue. You can also register your interest in being part of a pooled insurance scheme to try and reduce the cost of insurance premiums. Visit the Insurance Centre at http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/insurance/insurance_main.jsp.

We have also joined with ACER computers to provide a low-cost, high-quality computer deal for community, education and non-profit groups and their members with personal computers starting from just \$1499. Visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/tech/hardware_packages.do for details.

And don't forget our Management Centre where we have over 100 free Help Sheets on various aspects of running a community group.

[Back to Top](#)

11. Fast Forward.

If you found this newsletter helpful, please feel free to send this newsletter onto your friends and fellow community groups in your area. We would also like your input into this newsletter.

If you have any thoughts or any issues you would like addressed we would appreciate hearing from you. You can send your comments to brianw@ourcommunity.com.au or call (03) 9320 6813.

If you have received a grant or scholarship found on our database or successfully adapted the Raising Funds newsletter, let us know.

We now have button logos for those groups who want to set up links to ourcommunity.com.au from their own websites. You can find them on the media Centre. Just visit http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/article/view_image_list.do and right click your mouse on the image you want and then click on SAVE to your own computer. If you have any problems just contact brianw@ourcommunity.com.au or call (03) 9320 6813.

We also have brochures for any associations who want to mail out to their member groups and let them know about our products and services. Just let us know and we will be happy to supply.

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

[Back to Top](#)