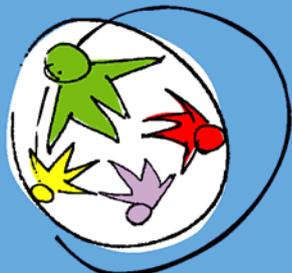


# Our Community **MATTERS**

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
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[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

March 2008 – Issued March 18, 2008

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### You can't get your hands dirty on a pedestal

By Rhonda Galbally AO  
CEO

Community workers can often feel overworked and unappreciated.

One of the many wonderful things about looking through the nomination forms for the Alcoa Foundation Outstanding Community Worker Award for 2008 was that we had a chance to see for once just how much people actually did appreciate them.

The compliments flowed off the page like honey (or perfume, if you think honey's a bit sticky, or wine, or whatever you appreciate most). For once, the praise we read was absolutely sincere, without any admixture of flattery or celebrity or mutual promotion.

These were people who people really, really admired. Trying to choose between them was like asking a parent which of the children is their favourite.

But we now have a winner. **Maureen Nicholls** has received the Alcoa Foundation 2008 Outstanding Community Worker Award for her work as a room coordinator at the Goldfields Child Care Centre in Kalgoorlie.

The testimonials that came with the nomination laud her dedication, her professionalism, and her commitment. Staff and parents (and children) are flabbergasted by her determination and her disregard of self. She is obviously a treasure.

"Maureen is never too busy to speak to a parent regarding their child ... Maureen is highly respected for her positive outlook and her striving for excellence in all that she does."

"Maureen mentors staff outside working hours to assist them to complete their child care studies ... She is committed to her professional development and recently updated her qualifications in her own time."

While these virtues are important, what comes through even more strongly is the love, affection, and respect that she draws from everybody she meets at the Centre.

"Maureen embraces diversity and the genuine love she has for humanity is clear in her work every day."

"It is apparent that Maureen revels in working with young children as she is constantly smiling, always patient and providing a calm, warm and predictable environment for the children in her room."

"She embraces children with disability, children from different cultures, and children who present with challenging behaviours. Her room is full of colour, warmth and affection."

Maureen embodies the experience we would all hope to meet with in our dealings with community organisations.

The referees speak, too, of Maureen's humility, and suggest that she'd be mortified to see the praise that was being heaped on her – so I don't suppose she'd mind me saying that the marvellous thing about Maureen is that she's not unique.

If you want to see what humble looks like, have a look at the faces of all those who had the job of sorting through the bulging stack of applications for the award. The goodness and humanity of these workers sets our grumbles about our own work into a proper perspective. Having looked through them myself I can say that any one of the candidates would have been a good choice, many would have been exceptional, and Maureen was extraordinary.

The standard of the applications was high because the standard of the field is high.

Community workers, as a class, are remarkably good at their jobs and remarkably good at relating to the community. Australian society would be unworkable without them.

Maureen's story will be featured in a booklet to be prepared about this year's crop of nominees, which will be distributed free to all those who nominated someone, or were nominated for the award themselves, and also to

those who attend this year's **Communities in Control** conference in Moonee Ponds on June 16 and 17 (sign up to come along [here](#)). In addition, all nominees will receive a certificate to mark their nomination for the award.

Our Community would like to congratulate the Alcoa Foundation for initiating this award, and for providing the \$5000 cash prize.

Congratulations too to all nominees, and especially to Maureen, who for the next year will bear the Community Worker Award banner – and will probably cut it up into felt scraps to decorate her children's dress-up costumes, at that.

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## 2. Untangling the web of questions over board/committee roles and functions

Board and committee members are forever getting themselves into a tangle over questions of governance.

Often the difficulties arise out of confusion about what governance is really for, and this question can be answered only by defining the values that underpin community governance. When those underlying principles are not stated clearly there can be confusion, conflict and avoidable crossed purpose.

In an effort to untangle the web, Our Community is developing a new Code of Governance for the Australian community sector.

The draft code – available online at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/governancecode](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/governancecode) - sets out the central values that we believe community organisations have in common.

The code also describes the boundaries of acceptable behaviour based on these values, and identifies the areas in which procedures are required to police these boundaries.

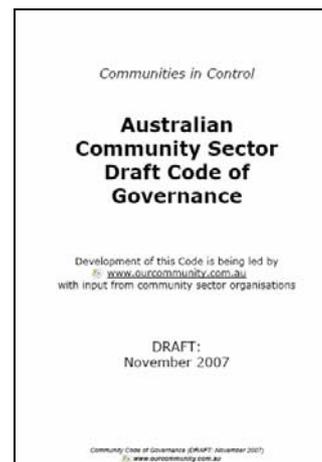
It is, of course, necessarily general in nature, and every community organisation will have to adapt the code to its particular situation, and produce the principles and policies that best suit its own operations.

The draft code currently covers the following topics:

- Board membership
- Collective commitment
- Democratic governance
- Management of the board
- Direction
- Risk management
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Community responsibility
- Environmental responsibility
- Diversity and empowerment
- Ethical fundraising
- Effectiveness.

**We're seeking your input into every aspect of the code, before the final version is released at the Communities in Control conference in June.**

We're particularly interested to hear your views on the underlying principles of the code – whether you agree with them, and whether you think they cover everything that needs to be covered – as well as the specific detail of the



draft and any practical difficulties you think your own organisation would run into if it adopted and implemented the draft code.

To read the code and find out how to have your say on its contents, go to [www.ourcommunity.com.au/governancecode](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/governancecode).

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### 3. To those that hath, more shall be given

The subscribers to this newsletter shouldn't be too hard to convince that community groups are a good thing, or that participation in community groups improves your health, or that community groups build social capital. As far as that goes, we're preaching to the choir.

Once we accept that, though, where does that lead us? If community group participation is a social good, how should it be – how can it be – distributed?

Let us turn to civil society theorist Barry Knight, director of UK think-tank [Centris](#).

“It is evident that civil society flourishes where it is least needed. Prosperous areas have significantly more charities per head of population than poorer areas.

So do these trends mean that a middle class professional civil society gets most of the cake, while the poor pick up the crumbs? In the context of rising inequality, this is an important question.”

“  
It is evident that  
civil society  
flourishes where  
it is least needed.  
”

No other social good, after all, is entirely left to market forces. Housing, income, health – in all of these the state steps in to redistribute some benefits to the needy.

And who, in community group terms, are the needy? The answer until very recently was that we simply didn't know. Very little research had been done on the distribution of not-for-profits around different levels of Australian society.

Attacking this gap, David Wain, under the Victorian Public Health Training Scheme, set to and calculated some figures for a sample of eight local government areas. He examined data on each area's access to playgroups, AFL football teams and players, cricket clubs, netball players, lawn bowls clubs and players, neighbourhood houses, scout groups, amateur theatre, drama, music, bands and choirs, historical societies and local and family history groups, and ethnicity specific groups (also as one group).

“In studies conducted by the Department of Victorian Communities (2005) participation in community groups was found to be lower in areas of social disadvantage, with the implication that residents of these areas may be missing out on the benefits of community group participation, further compounding disadvantage. ...

“No research currently exists on the differences between community groups in different socio-economic areas, so this study is an attempt to conduct a preliminary exploration of this area ... to measure any differences in the opportunities people may have to engage with social capital based on the geographic location in which they live.”

As one would expect, Wain's study found that in Australia's cities “the patterns were consistent, with the advantaged areas having better access than the disadvantaged areas.”

On the other hand, it also found that “Within the rural areas there were no consistent differences between advantaged and disadvantaged areas... [and] Overall, rural areas generally had better access than even the advantaged metro areas”, which would not necessarily have been predicted.

Wain speculates, but is unable to prove, that “many people arriving in Australia from other countries are coming from places with a strong place-based local culture of community inclusiveness and engagement that does not require formal group structures, but the migration process has dislocated this sense of community, leaving them ill-equipped to re-engage with community in a manner that is foreign to them.”

If the new government is serious about tackling entrenched disadvantage, some means needs to be found to remedy these difficulties and to build social capital and community capacity in areas where these are lacking. David Wain's research, while important, is only the beginning.

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## 4. TOOLBOX: Sharing financial administration – a feasibility study

Small non-government organisations must adopt efficient practices and “take advantage of economies of scale, co-operative practices and optimal use of resources” to help maximise their chances of long-term financial viability, according to a report from the Council of Social Service of New South Wales (NCOSS).

The report – *Sharing Financial Administration* – looks at models for sharing back office functions such as financial administration and management, concentrating on four promising emerging models:

1. Outsourcing these functions to a specialist provider;
2. Partnering with a larger community organisation;
3. Co-location with other smaller community groups, and;
4. Joining back office and governance functions with other small non-government groups – forming an umbrella organisation.

The NCOSS guide says that each of these sharing arrangements carries with it its own potential benefits and risks, and each group needs to look at the options, as well as its own situation, to see which model might be best for them.

For example:

- **Outsourcing** might lessen the workload, ensure it is done by a seasoned professional and make the group less dependent on the individual. But the risk is that the professional might not have the intricate sector knowledge required to do the job, and that costs might be prohibitive.
- **A partnership** can increase the organisation’s access to the specialised skills it needs, as well as help both groups through the knowledge and contacts they share. But at the same time there is a risk the larger organisation’s culture and values could start to dominate the smaller group, and that the larger group could deviate from its core mission and goals.
- **Co-location and forming a company** can produce cost savings as each group doesn’t have to have its own bookkeeper, and can see service delivery improve through quick access to the expertise of other co-located groups. But there is a risk that co-located groups might not be compatible, that conflict might arise, and that the boundaries, duties and responsibilities of each group could be clouded.
- **Joining functions and forming an umbrella organisation** can increase the stability and viability of the infrastructure, as well as having groups possess a stronger voice in terms of gaining funding, lobbying or advocating. But the risks are that smaller groups might feel their autonomy is being lost, and that individual organisations’ capacity can be reduced.

To increase the chances of success in these arrangements, the NCOSS report says:

- There must be good relationships between the participating organisations and a great deal of trust.
- The set-up phase has to be properly resourced so all the necessary work can be completed.

The full study can be downloaded by following this link: <http://tinyurl.com/2k43hp>.

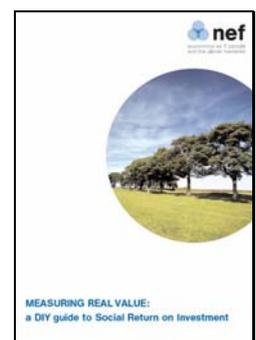
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## 5. Exactly how good are you? Measuring social return on investment

One of the most difficult challenges not-for-profit community groups face is that of quantifying the value they add to the community.

In the end, everything seems to come down to money, because the point of having the measurements is to show that the money people give you has been well spent.

By definition, though, you’re not doing this for the money, and making the conversion between (say) mental health problems alleviated by an accommodation scheme, on the one hand, and money saved by state health services, on the other, is a complicated and tortuous business



English not-for-profit thinktank nef (fashionably lower-case), has now contributed to making the business slightly less tortuous by producing a [guide](#) to calculating your organisation's SROI, or Social Return on Investment.

You raise from all sources, say, \$400,000 a year; do you produce \$500,000 worth of good for an SROI of 1.25, or a more impressive \$800,000 for an SROI of 2, where every dollar invested in your work saves two dollars elsewhere?

There are still lot of complications along the way. If the costs are happening now but the benefits are only occurring in the future, should you discount the value of the benefits when calculating current SROI? How do you provide for the value of good things that would have happened anyway, even without your work? How do you avoid double counting?

The nef guide to SROI goes through the process with case studies and examples.

Gather your stakeholders, ask them what they see as the benefits of your organisation's work, compare your inputs with your outputs (not the same thing as outcomes, by the way) and then refer across to the available figures to try and pin down where your added value comes in.

(And for an example of how to present your findings, have a look at the [next item](#)).

It should also be appreciated, though, that the reason this is an English guide and not an Australian production is that the move towards evidence-based funding has gone further in the UK than it has in Australia. As things now stand it's unlikely that any funders in this country are going to demand to know your SROI, and given that it's a major resource cost to find it out, you may find it hard to get the board to go with the commitment.

There are, though, other advantages of going through the process. The calculations should give you some idea of which of your projects are effective and which so-so. It's a useful discipline to have to set down your assumptions in mathematical terms, and running a sensitivity analysis to see what happens if your assumptions change is an important risk management tool.

Generally, though, it's fair to say that nobody's going to rush into doing a full SROI unless

- It's demanded by funders
- It promises to be a fundraising selling point.

Neither of these has really caught on in this country. Yet. It's also true, however, that if you're in a service area it may be a good idea to run a quick and dirty analysis along the lines nef suggests just to see approximately what you find.

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## 6. IDEAS YOU CAN STEAL – Making a compelling argument

Into our inbox recently dropped this email from New Philanthropy Capital, a UK organisation that works to provide independent research and advice to help donors choose the right organisation for their funds.

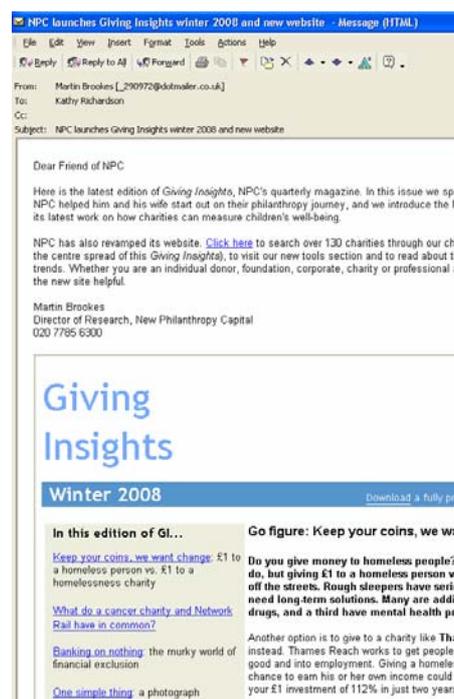
The email provides a good example of the sort of language, and the sort of calculations, that are increasingly being demanded of organisations seeking donations.

Here's the full text:

### *Go figure: Keep your coins, we want change*

*Do you give money to homeless people? About half of us do, but giving £1 to a homeless person won't get him or her off the streets. Rough sleepers have serious problems that need long-term solutions. Many are addicted to alcohol or drugs, and a third have mental health problems.*

*Another option is to give to a charity like **Thames Reach** instead. Thames Reach works to get people off the streets for good and into employment. Giving a homeless person the chance to earn his or her*



own income could deliver a return on your £1 investment of 112% in just two years.

Thames Reach trains homeless people to work in the care and housing sectors at a cost of £6,253 for each nine-month traineeship. More than four out of five people who have completed the course have gone on to find jobs. Most of these jobs are for homeless charities, where the trainees' personal experiences are a huge benefit.

Taking into account the success rate, we calculate that it costs Thames Reach £10,840 to help someone into work. Even on the minimum wage, a year's earnings come to £11,500. After just one year, this represents a return of 6% on the money invested in Thames Reach. The next year, there are no training costs but the earnings continue, so your return rises to 112%.

As well as providing financial benefits, stable work gives people a routine and makes them healthier and less isolated.

£1 to a homeless person vs. £1 to a homelessness charity. Your change, your choice.

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## 7. Training opportunities now online

A new training calendar listing all scheduled training programs to be run by Our Community during 2008 is now available at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/training](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/training).

Among the programs on offer this year in locations across the country are:

- **Certificate IV in Business (Governance)** – accredited four-day training for community board/committee members and supporters
  - Sydney, 1-4 April
  - Perth, 28 April - 1 May
  - Margaret River, 28 April - 1 May
  - Coonamble, 6-9 May
  - Adelaide, 19-22 May
  - Melbourne, 10-13 June
- **Intensive Winning Grants Seminars** – half-day seminar for community groups
  - Melbourne, 18 April
  - Sydney, 5 June
  - Brisbane, 6 June
  - Perth, 27 June
- **Intensive Community Fundraising Seminar** – half-day seminar for community groups
  - Melbourne, 2 May
  - Brisbane, 9 May
  - Sydney, 16 May
  - Adelaide, 23 May
  - Perth, 30 May
- **Making Meetings Work** – half-day seminars on running better meetings for community groups **NEW!!**
  - Brisbane, 8 May
  - Melbourne, 19 May
  - Sydney, 26 May
- **Killing Me Softly** – half-day conflict resolution seminars for community groups **NEW!!**
  - Brisbane, 8 May
  - Melbourne, 19 May
  - Sydney, 26 May

Our Community training is designed to be affordable (all half-day programs cost just \$95), as well as practical and widely applicable to Australian community groups of all types and sizes.

Tailored programs can also be designed and delivered to meet the particular needs of a local community.

For further information about scheduled or tailored training opportunities, including online bookings, please go to [www.ourcommunity.com.au/training](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/training) or click one of the buttons below:



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## 8. THUMBS UP: Gold Coast Gives – supporting & strengthening the local community



More than 2000 small, not-for-profit community organisations operate in Gold Coast City. With a rapidly growing population, these essential services are struggling to meet demand and are heavily reliant on donations and volunteers.

To support these organisations and tap in to increasing online donation trends, Gold Coast City Council, in conjunction with Our Community, launched the *Gold Coast Gives* program in June 2005.

*Gold Coast Gives* is a free and secure online donation service linking donors with not-for-profit community organisations. There are no administration costs or fees for donors or recipients, and advice and options for giving are available on the website to inform choices.

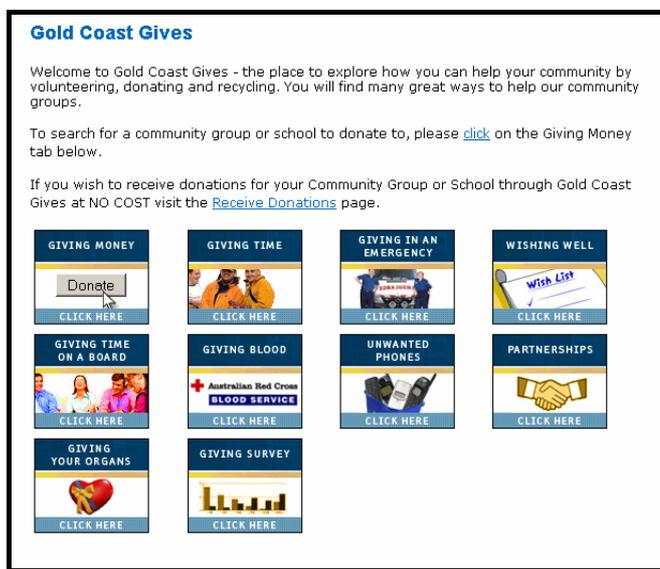
More than \$130,000 has been donated to 32 local registered organisations so far, with \$7500 being the highest individual donation recorded.

As well as facilitating financial donations, the website acts as a resource and information hub on topics including fundraising, grants and business partnerships, and also provides a matching service for boards and committees.

A particularly successful aspect of the program has been the “*Wishing Well*”, through which equipment and supplies can be sought and donated. More than 900 items of office furniture have been donated by Gold Coast City Council to 70 local organisations through this element of the program.

Local organisations registered on *Gold Coast Gives* have also benefited through receiving free subscriptions provided by Gold Coast City Council to Our Community’s *Board Builder* and *EasyGrants* newsletters, and other publications relating to community organisation management and fundraising. Representatives from registered organisations have also had the opportunity to attend conferences and workshops, including the *Communities in Control* and *Australasian Drug Strategy* conferences.

Other benefits of *Gold Coast Gives* membership include networking opportunities and the sharing of knowledge and organisational strategies. The program has also promoted closer and stronger relationships between the Council and local service organisations and an overall strengthening of the local not-for-profit sector, which in turn benefits the whole community.



An evaluation of *Gold Coast Gives* was carried out in May 2006, in which 90% of respondents said they'd had a positive experience with the program, and 75% said they had received a direct benefit from involvement.

Benefits of *Gold Coast Gives* identified by respondents included:

*"It's great support for community groups; the Gold Coast Gives website gives great suggestions for obtaining funds, as well as donations."*

*"Provides resources for non-profit organisations which they may otherwise not receive and also encourages cooperation and networking between organisations."*

*"We received much needed furniture which also meant not having to search and apply for additional funding"*

For further information visit [www.ourcommunity.com.au/goldcoastgives](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/goldcoastgives).

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## 9. Have Your Say: Federal Government seeks community input

The new Federal Government has survived its first 100 days in office, and it still seems more than willing to listen if your group has issues to raise.

There has been much talk about the **Australia 2020** summit in the media. If you want to make a submission for delegates to consider before the April 19 and 20 summit, you need to have it in by 5pm on Wednesday April 9.

Submissions are limited to 500 words per topic. Each submission must focus on at least one of the 10 topics up for discussion at the summit, but you can submit 500 words on as many of the topics as you please. The topics are:

- The Australian Economy;
- Infrastructure;
- Sustainability and Climate Change;
- Rural Australia;
- Health;
- Communities and Families;
- Indigenous Australia;
- Creative Australia;
- Governance; and
- Australia's Future in the World.

You can make your submission online, download a form online and post it, or you can phone a toll-free number (1800 703 599) and have a form posted to you which you can then return. Go to [www.australia2020.gov.au/submissions](http://www.australia2020.gov.au/submissions) for details.

(Be aware that if you complete the form online, you have to do it in one go, so you're encouraged to draft it in another document and copy and paste across.)

Other government forums seeking your input are the **Community Cabinet** meetings, which are designed to allow close consultation with the community on the local and national things that concern them.

Two Community Cabinet meetings have been held so far, one in Perth and one near Brisbane, and more are expected to be scheduled.

They usually take place on Sundays, provide an hour-long public forum for issues to be raised with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet Ministers, and then an hour is set aside for pre-arranged meetings between Cabinet Ministers and members of the community.

To find out about future community cabinets, go to [http://www.pmc.gov.au/community\\_cabinet](http://www.pmc.gov.au/community_cabinet).

**Homelessness** is also high on the new government's agenda. Keep your eye on the newspapers and on

[www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au) if you're interested in making a submission on the issues raised in a forthcoming Green Paper on homelessness.

The Green Paper is expected to be tabled in Parliament in May, and the call for submissions will then be advertised. A White Paper with a plan of action is expected by August.

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## 10. Could your group be the 2008 Westpac Australian Community Idol?

In 2005, Brisbane-based organisation **Sisters Inside** shocked and inspired Communities in Control delegates with its story of advocacy for the human rights for women in prisons.

"Everything we do is for the women inside who do not belong in prisons," said Sisters Inside founder Debbie Kilroy as she collected the 2005 Community Idol trophy.

"This is a just reward for all of our workers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty under the most difficult circumstances."



2005 Winner: Sisters Inside



2006 Winner: Wunan Foundation

In 2006, it was the turn of **The Wunan Foundation**, a Western Australian group that supports training, jobs and other activities for the 5000-strong Aboriginal community in a region as big as the state of Victoria.

Wunan creates sustainable businesses involving local Aboriginal people, and provides management and governance support to other groups to help them become more effective and sustainable in serving their local communities.

"We really didn't know if we stood a chance but it's rewarding to see that a contemporary approach to an old issue can get the nod from the biggest community conference in the country," Wunan's business development manager Paul Davis told the 2006 Communities in Control audience as he accepted the award from special guest presenter, AFL legend Kevin Sheedy.

Last year, New South Wales group **two eight two eight** won the prize after demonstrating how its work was helping to reinvigorate the small, drought-stricken community of Galargambone (postcode 2828), and encouraging locals to seize control of their own future.

The prize was presented by special guests Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody before the veteran Australian singers concluded the conference with a stirring rendition of the community favourite, *From Little Things Big Things Grow*.

**Who will be named the 2008 Westpac Australian Community Idol?**

Could it be your group?

You don't need to be big, or well-known, or highly resourced to win. You just need to be innovative, effective and valuable to the community that you serve.

Read about past winners and find out how to nominate at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/idol](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/idol).



2007 Winner: two eight two eight

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# Communities in Control Conference 2008

## The Community Challenge:

Building political, environmental, social &  
economic pathways towards true social inclusion

Monday & Tuesday 16-17 June 2008

Melbourne, Australia

## REGISTER NOW

Visit [www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic2008](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic2008)

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*PLUS:* Pre-Conference Skills Day - Sunday 15 June 2008

### WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT:

How to successfully work with all levels of government - local, state and federal - and get results.



[ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)



**CENTACARE**  
Catholic Family Services

## 11. Community Briefs

### Going green

Ask most community organisations and schools whether they would like to be more energy efficient and do their bit for the environment, and you'll most likely get a hearty "Yes ... but" in reply.

The "but", of course, is to do with cost. How do you justify installing solar hot water systems, solar power panels and rainwater tanks when your budget is already stretched to the limit?

The good news is there are a range of government rebates available to organisations willing to do their bit for the environment by improving their energy efficiency. Even with these rebates, the costs can still be quite high – but they make them a little less prohibitive.

One of the major rebate schemes of this type in Australia is the Federal Government's Photo-Voltaic Rebate Program for people wanting to install solar power panels.

Under the program, community organisations and schools which install photovoltaic systems (solar panels) can claim 50% of the system cost up to 2kW – an amount equivalent to \$8000. For example, if your system cost \$5000, the government rebate is 50%, or \$2500.

Of course, there are guidelines involved. More details on this program and others will feature in the next edition of Raising Funds. To find out more or subscribe, visit: [www.ourcommunity.com.au/raisingfunds](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/raisingfunds).

### Top 50 Grants guides now available

The latest batch of Our Community's *Top 50 Grants* guides is now available.

The popular books are compiled by Our Community's hard-working grants team and list the top 50 grants across a number of categories.

Book categories for 2008 are:

- Community;
- Youth;
- Environment and Heritage;
- Sport and Recreation;
- Rural and Regional;
- Multicultural;
- Education (**NEW!!**).

There are eight different versions of each guide available – one for each state or territory of Australia.

The *Top 50 Grants – Education* handbook, which is designed primarily for schools and other educational providers, is a new title for 2008.

Apart from providing the pick of the grants available, these books also help grantseekers compile a winning application by targeting and researching specific grants, working through what to include in your application, writing your application and then following it up.

Essential information – grant name, provider, amount of funding available, closing dates, purpose, overview, eligibility, how to apply and contact details – are provided for each grant listed.

Plus there's a handy calendar to help you plan your grantseeking for the rest of the year, as well as Rhonda Galbally's top 50 tips for winning grants.

Each book costs \$36. It's a great tool to have on your shelf, a terrific complement to the monthly EasyGrants newsletter, and an invaluable time-saver. Go to [www.ourcommunity.com.au/top50grants](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/top50grants) to find out more or make an order.



## Our Community Hero – Sharon Stead

Congratulations to Marist Youth Care (MYC) worker Sharon Stead, who has been selected as this month's Community Hero.

Sharon, a program development manager at the western Sydney service, was nominated for the award by business and development strategies manager, Pauline Robertson, who praised Sharon's "incredible talent for working with at-risk young people".



"Thanks for helping me out, without putting me down," is how one young person has described the approach employed by Sharon, who has worked with more than of 500 at-risk young people in the past six years.

Pauline says Sharon has also made an outstanding contribution to MYC in the training of other staff – "her ability to enrich the lives of those around her is truly inspirational," she says.

Sharon 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 Sharon and other past Community Heroes, or find out how to nominate a Community Hero, visit [www.ourcommunity.com.au/heroes](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/heroes).

## It's three o'clock in the morning; do you know where your auditor is?

*Do you have your organisation's books audited? You do? Are you sure?*

For those of us who feel we don't have enough ulcers, it's worth looking at the current ruckus that's enveloping the inner affairs of the (American) National Republican Campaign Committee (which works to get Republicans elected to congress).

According to the *New York Times*, it all began to unravel when one of the Committee, who was himself an accountant, asked to meet with the audit firm that was checking the NRCC's books. The NRCC's treasurer agreed to set up a meeting, but then chickened out 30 minutes before it was to start and confessed that there actually hadn't been any audits since 2003.

The *New York Times* report says that the fundraising committee had since determined that Mr Ward had submitted a series of falsified audits.

It's not yet clear yet why the treasurer was so keen to hide the real numbers, but the simplest explanation currently has the floor. NRCC internal audits since Ward's discovery show that "hundreds of thousands of dollars are missing and presumed stolen."

One can't, it seems, be too suspicious. As a treasurer, or chair, or indeed as a CEO, have you ever actually shaken hands with your auditor? And – just in case – was he or she wearing a dark glasses or a false moustache?

## Tax facts for not-for-profits

The Australian Tax Office has released a handy new fact sheet designed to assist organisations in working out their income tax status.

The fact sheet – *Does your Organisation Have to Pay Income Tax?* – outlines the various rules and exemptions which apply to groups in the sector.

The fact sheet then works through several key points to help you determine if your group is income tax-exempt, asking questions about your non-profit and charitable status and explaining

- What to do if your organisation is a charity, and what to do if your group isn't a charity but meets exemption guidelines, and;
- If your group isn't eligible for exemption, how it will be treated for tax purposes.

The fact sheet is available for viewing online or for download in PDF format, and has been translated into 17 different languages. To view or download the sheet, follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/2sfw15>.

## Queensland community groups invited to submit courses for QCE approval

The Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) is Queensland's new senior school qualification, replacing the Senior Certificate this year for those completing Year 12.

The new qualification is designed to take in a wide range of learning options, including formal learning options such as school subjects and apprenticeships, and recognised structured community-based learning courses.

Queensland community groups are now being invited to apply to have their courses recognised so that young Queenslanders can use completion of the course towards their QCE.

The Queensland Studies Authority says community groups that have their course recognised as a QCE subject will benefit from the establishment of networks and contacts for future recruitment, as well as an increased profile for their course and their organisation.

Young people who take a community-based course are expected to benefit from enhanced post-school pathways, better networks, real-world experience and increased participation in learning.

Recognised community-based courses must include 60-80 hours of learning that is of a senior secondary standard.

For further information contact the Queensland Studies Authority by telephoning (07) 3864 0321, emailing [recognition@qsa.qld.edu.au](mailto:recognition@qsa.qld.edu.au), or visit the website at [www.qsa.qld.edu.au](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au) (click on 'QCE' and select 'Recognised Studies' from the menu options).

## 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:

- **Harmony Day:** March 21
- **World Water Day:** March 22
- **National Neighbour Day:** March 30
- **National Smile Day:** April 1
- **National Youth Week:** April 5-13
- **World Health Day:** April 5-13

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](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/calendar).

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

### SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE: Managing your mail

Here at Our Community, we're starting work on a new book about making your mailings as environmentally friendly as possible.

There's quite a process involved in getting your mail out ... from choosing and buying paper, through printing and packaging to delivery, returned mail and recycling.

Has your group put some thought into making any or all of these steps kinder to the environment?

Have you got some responsible practices in place, or do you just have lots of questions?

We'd like to hear about what you are actually doing, and what your questions are. We need some case studies for the book and your responses will give us an idea of the sorts of issues we should be covering.

If you'd like some questions answered or think you've got the right idea already, please email [christyd@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:christyd@ourcommunity.com.au) by the end of this month. We look forward to hearing from you!

## WANTED: Office space to share (QLD)

The Panic Anxiety Disorder Association of Queensland Inc is looking for office space to share with an organisation or business.

The organisation is looking for a small office that can house a desk and filing cabinet, and where a separate phone line can be connected. It is able to pay a small amount of rent and ongoing costs.

For further information please contact Maureen or David on (07) 3353 4851 or 0438 751 631 or email to [padaqld@bigpond.com](mailto:padaqld@bigpond.com).

## WANTED: Computer drop-off points, flash drives (WA)

CLiCK – a Rockingham-based organisation that works to supply free computers to students, low-income people and not-for-profit organisations – is seeking computer drop-off locations around Perth and surrounding areas.

The organisation accepts donations of full systems and parts of computer-related equipment which it recycles for distribution.

If you can provide a suitable drop-off point, please contact CLiCK by telephoning (08) 9467 2271 or email to [click@clickonline.org.au](mailto:click@clickonline.org.au).

CLiCK is also seeking donations of USB flash drives to ease the pressure on the families of young people returning to school. Old (or new) drives can be posted to: CLiCK, PO Box 168, Rockingham, WA 6168.

### Did you know?

Our Community has a listing on our website of places that accept second-hand computers for recycling. View the listing in the Australian Giving Centre at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving).



## OFFER: Free or nominal-rate mediation services (VIC)

Alan Hebb, a barrister of 12 years standing, is offering his services as an independent mediator to any community group in Melbourne or country Victoria at either a nominal rate or free of charge.

His role of counsel assisting has helped Alan develop the skills to deal with people in conflict from an independent perspective, however he is most interested in assisting parties to resolve their conflicts themselves through mediation.

If you think Alan may be able to assist your group he is happy to have a chat – call him on 0412 606701 or email to [alanhebb@alphalink.com.au](mailto:alanhebb@alphalink.com.au).



## SHARING THE KNOWLEDGE: Collection tins

In the February edition of *Our Community Matters*, we asked Our Community members to share their knowledge of where community groups throughout Australia can purchase or hire collection tins for use in fundraising appeals.

Here's what we found out:

- The Collection Box Company ([www.collectionbox.com.au](http://www.collectionbox.com.au)) sell a range of plastic and cardboard fundraising collection devices, including buckets, boxes and dishes. The company can only distribute products to registered charities or welfare organisations (not individuals or consultants), and products are available for sale only (hiring is not available). Collection Box can only provide quotes once it knows the colour, quantity and finish of the required product due to the large number of variations available. The company suggests organisations club together to make a larger order so they can benefit from reduced rates.
- Roytal Enterprises Ltd ([www.roytal.com.au/commercial/collection-cans.html](http://www.roytal.com.au/commercial/collection-cans.html)) describes itself as “a major supplier of collection cans” and can also provide services such as can label fixing. Costs depend on the quantity ordered, and a 20-can minimum order applies. Prices are listed on the Roytal website – see link above. The company is Melbourne-based.

- The Paraplegic-Quadriplegic Association of WA has collection tins available for hire. They charge \$110 including GST, plus a refundable \$2 per can deposit charge. The tins are probably only useful to those in Perth and surrounds. For further information contact Alex on (08) 9381 0125.
- The fundraisers for the Variety charity for children suggest that collection tins can be found at most discount shops – look for the one with the dollar bills on them, or make your own stickers to make the boxes look more official.

## SHARING THE KNOWLEDGE: Databases

We also asked members to share their tips and experiences on using databases. Martin Bartlett, National Sustainability Manager for Good Beginnings Australia writes:

Check out <http://www.salesforcefoundation.org/product>

*They have a terrific corporate philanthropic foundation that donates their world class CRM system to qualifying NFPs. When you download the trial, make sure you choose the not-for-profit version.*

*"Putting salesforce in the hands of qualified nonprofits is a critical part of our Foundation's 1% model. The product donation allows nonprofits to focus more time on their social mission and increase their efficiency.*

*"Salesforce is currently used by over 2700 nonprofits around the world to manage a wide range of organizational needs including managing constituent relationships, fund raising campaigns, volunteer opportunities, program delivery, and much more".*

*The beauty is that it is an online database system – i.e. web-based so you can log in from anywhere. Also, updates are automatic, so you are always using the most up-to-date software. It is infinitely customisable and there is a whole industry of value-add products built around it. It is quick too. Being web-based you don't need to worry about the old laptop handling a new program – as long as you can log on to the internet, you are in business.*

*The downside is getting to know how to use it. There is a free 'administrators' course. My guess (and experience) is that this is pitched above the heads of most not-for-profits where the IT manager is also the fundraising manager, marketing manager, office manager and chief bottle washer all rolled into one. Nonetheless, the more not-for-profits use it the more information will become available. My guess is that this will become the industry norm in the next 10 years.*

Martin Bartlett | National Sustainability Manager, Good Beginnings Australia  
([martin.bartlett@goodbeginnings.net.au](mailto:martin.bartlett@goodbeginnings.net.au))

And David Bartlett writes:

*We have found Legrand CRM to be very useful for contact relationship management and very flexible to customise with extra fields being able to group contacts by keywords etc.*

*Hope this is helpful.*

David Bartlett | Partner | Resolve Consulting Group ([david@resolveconsulting.net](mailto:david@resolveconsulting.net))

Putting in place a new database can involve a big investment in time and money, and you want to make sure you get it right. For this reason, it can be a good idea to consult an I.T. expert who has experience in this area before you make any major changes.

For further information about databases, visit the Community Tech Centre area of the Our Community website: [www.ourcommunity.com.au/tech](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/tech).

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## 13. Top Five

### Five practical secrets of selling

Whether you're trying to move chocolate Easter bunnies or just selling your mission to prospective donors, there are some practical tips that will advance your chances of a successful closing. Don't leave these things to the happenstance of the moment.

- 1. Promote friendly competition**  
Have every volunteer set a personal sales target. Encourage them to be the best. Emphasise achievement, not failure. Have the volunteer say their target forecast in front of the group, building commitment and intra-group rivalry.
- 2. Sell from the inside out**  
Begin with friends and family and only then start branching out. Have every volunteer make a list of at least 10 prospective customers (family, workmates, neighbours from down the road) before they set out.
- 3. Dummy runs**  
Rehearse the sales pitch with the volunteers. Once they've given a lift speech or two, they'll be seasoned pros.
- 4. Smile and guile**  
When bracing strangers for money, smile and introduce yourself. Even that scrap of human contact is a help in raising funds. After that, keep it simple – "We need your help because the grandstand needs painting." *Because* is a very potent trigger word.
- 5. Ask**  
Always end with a direct and unambiguous request for money. Yes, if they wanted to they could work out for themselves that you probably want their money, but they'd be only too glad to let it drop unless they're firmly cued.

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



### Good Moves :: Jobs Bulletin

[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

#### JOB VACANCY LISTINGS (Paid Positions)

##### New South Wales

Job Title	Organisation	
Fundraising Officer	NADO	<a href="#">Details</a>

##### Northern Territory

Job Title	Organisation	
Community Development Coordinator	ReLink Australia	<a href="#">Details</a>

## Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">TAP Driver</a>	St John Ambulance	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Executive Assistant</a>	Schizophrenia Fellowship of Queensland Inc	<a href="#">Details</a>

## Western Australia

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Sexual Assault Counsellor</a>	Chrysalis Support Services Inc	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Solicitor</a>	Southern Aboriginal Corporation	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">Branch Chief Commissioner</a>	Scouts Association of Australia	<a href="#">Details</a>

## 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	
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Quest for Life Foundation (operates Petrea King Quest forLife Centre)	<a href="#">Details</a>

## Northern Territory

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, General Board Member</a>	Darwin Toy Library Inc	<a href="#">Details</a>

## Queensland

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Treasurer</a>	Business Liaison Association Inc	<a href="#">Details</a>

## South Australia

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">Treasurer, Secretary, General Board Member, PRO, Fundraiser, Grant Writer</a>	World Youth Empowerment Association Inc.	<a href="#">Details</a>

## Victoria

Job Title	Organisation	
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	DEAL Communication Centre Inc	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Australian Lesbian and Gay Archive	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	playUP Contemporary Youth Arts	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Everyday People Improving Everyday Lives (EPIEL INC)	<a href="#">Details</a>
<a href="#">General Board Member</a>	Community West Inc	<a href="#">Details</a>

[www.ourcommunity.com.au/jobs](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)" and a direct link to the [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) site if on a webpage.

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

## 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](http://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](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/aboutus).

**Killing me Softly...**  
*Reduce Conflict*

Half-day seminar for staff, volunteers and supporters on HOW TO MINIMISE CONFLICT and let peace reign in your community group

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[www.ourcommunity.com.au/kms08](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/kms08)  
or phone 03 9320 6800  
**TO BOOK NOW YOUR STATE!**