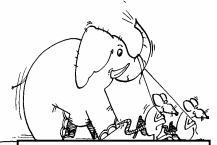


Wimmera Volunteers
20 Firebrace Street, Horsham
(P.O. Box 267, Horsham, 3402)
Phone: (03) 5382 5607
Fax: (03) 5382 5711
Email: wimmvol@netconnect.com.au
www.wimmvol.com.au

June/2008



Helping
communities
help themselves

The Volunteering Voice

National survey of volunteering issues

Going through Volunteer Australia just released National Survey of Volunteering for 2008; I picked out some interesting points in the survey that I thought may be relevant to our region.

The survey, according to VA "paints a picture of continuing strong commitment to volunteering across Australia".

The survey states, 98% of volunteers feel their work as a volunteer always or sometimes makes a difference.

Sixty seven per cent of volunteers reported that the organisation's goals were the major reason for being involved with it.

Individuals commented that volunteering increased their sense of community belonging.

Most organizations surveyed reported they have a volunteer manager process in place; half have volunteer appraisal performance management processes in place.

The above shows the importance of organizations having a volunteer manager in place, something that Wimmera Volunteers supports.

Forty two per cent of volunteers surveyed reported they have not been given a written job description for their volunteer role.

Ninety two per cent of organisations surveyed provided training and skill development volunteers.

Out of pocket expenses continue to be important to volunteers and organisations.

According to the survey, in the

past year, no increases in the capacity to reimburse volunteers out of pocket expenses accrued.

Nearly half of volunteers surveyed do not receive any reimbursement of their out of pocket expenses – only 13 per cent receive full reimbursement.

Twenty eight percent of organizations offer full reimbursement, while 22 per cent of organizations surveyed, couldn't afford to offer any.

Another area that is impacting volunteers is background checks.

Forty per cent of organizations and 20 per cent of volunteers surveyed report background checking has most impacted on them in the last 12 months.

Some of the negative impacts of background checking included lengthy process time, the cost of the checks, complex processes and lack of transferability of checks between states and organizations.

What are your thoughts and concerns on issues relating to volunteering, rising costs of fuel? Give me a buzz, or email me at vmp@wimmvol.com.au.

GRANTS – WHAT'S OUT THERE?

All organisations are on the lookout for new ways of funding.

A great source of information for not-for-profits is very informative www.ourcommunity.com.au website.

Each month I receive the EasyGrants Newsletter from our community at Wimmera Volunteers.

One of the grants they are highlighting this month is called Helping Hands program, through which the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) will provide up to \$50,000 to benefit people in rural and remote Australia.

Applications from communities with a population of 10,000 or less will receive preference under this program.

Also sporting clubs in need of equipment have a reason to get excited this month as Telstra has opened its Assistance funds. The Australian Football League Fund, Football Assistance Fund, Rugby League Assistance Fund, Surf Life Saving Assistance Fund and Swimming Assistance Fund all close for applications on June 30.

The Public Internet Access Program (PIAP) which works to help community organisations provide free or affordable public internet access to people within their communities. Organisations including not-for-profit organisations and local government authorities that provide or intend to provide public internet access for the specified target groups are eligible to apply.

If you need more information regarding the Easy Grants newsletter, drop me a line at Wimmera Volunteers, 5382 5607.

Working with children check and police checks

Wimmera Volunteers received notification during the week regarding police check fees from Victoria Police.

The cost of a national name check for a volunteer for an authorised organisation is \$14. Organisation must be registered to receive this reduced rate. A fingerprint records search is \$127.

In 2006, the Victorian Government introduced a new checking system to help protect children under 18 years of age from physical or sexual harm. The Working with Children (WWC) Check creates a mandatory minimum checking standard across Victoria.

The WWC Check helps to keep children safe by preventing those who pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them, in either paid or volunteer work. If you work or volunteer with children you may need to apply for a WWC Check.

Employers, volunteer organisations and agencies must ensure that any of their staff or volunteers who need a WWC Check have applied by the due date.

The WWC Check is being phased in over five years. If you need a WWC Check, you must apply by the due date for your field of child-related work.

The next due date is 30 June 2008.

Police record checks for volunteers under 18. The current policy of Victoria Police is that criminal record checks are conducted for prospective volunteers aged 15-17 years provided the check is requested by a hosting organizations. Police checks will not be conducted if requested by an individual volunteer.

Ideally, request for police checks from hosting organisations may be accompanied by a letter of support from parents or legal guardian.

It is Victoria Police current policy not to conduct criminal record checks for prospective volunteers aged under 15 years.

In the event Victoria Police receive an application from a person aged under 15 years, or an application form a hosting organisation requesting a criminal record check for a person aged under 15 years, Victoria Police will return the application with action.

Persons under 18 years of age are exempt from the Working With Children Check. The Victorian Child Employment Act 2003 defines a child as a person under 15 years of age.

It is recommended that organisations wanting to engage volunteers under 15 years, the organisation receives written agreement from parents or legal guardian, to the child's volunteering activities and that parents or legal guardian transport their child to and from the location where volunteering takes place.

It is also recommended that the child is supervised by a minimum of two people with appropriate supervisory skills aged over 18 and comply with the Working With Children check.

When to Apply

The Working with Children (WWC) Check is being phased in from 2006 to 2011. Each year different child-related occupational fields will be introduced. If you are required to pass the WWC Check, you **must** apply by the due date or you may be subject to penalties under the *Working with Children Act*. You can lodge your application at any time before the due date.

Note: If you work or volunteer in two or more occupational fields, you must apply by the earliest of the two or more due dates. The next deadline for applications for the WWC Check is **30 June 2008**. Applications for those people undertaking 'child-related work' as defined in section 9 of the *Working with Children Act 2005* **must** be made by this date.

ABS Surveys Not for Profits

During May, I went to ABS Regional Information Session that was held in Horsham.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is conducting its first survey of Not for Profit organisations in a bid to measure performance, structure and activities.

The survey will look at the activities of organisations based on the 2006-07 financial year

The ABS says this is the first time a survey of the sector has been undertaken. The ABS previously published the Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account around the 1999-2000 financial year which was compiled using a variety of existing data sources. The Satellite Account enables the Not for Profit sector's contribution to the economy to be determined

The 2006-07 survey questionnaire was mailed to a sample of Not for Profits across Australia in mid-late August 2007.

The ABS will be collecting financial data on various income and expense items which should be readily available from standard end-of-year accounts. In addition, organisations will be asked about the number of persons employed at the end of June 2007 as well as the number of volunteers who worked for the organisation during the 2006-07 financial year.

The ABS says the questionnaire has been extensively tested with organisations in the sector to make it as easy as possible to complete while still collecting the information required.

It says co-operation is sought from organisations to produce accurate and timely results in order to maximise the use of these new statistics. The ABS will accept careful estimates if exact figures are not available.

The information requested by the ABS will remain confidential. Data from this survey will be released only in an aggregated form so that details of individual organisations cannot be identified.

The results from the survey will provide detailed measures of the performance, structure and activity of organisations operating in Australia, including the composition of income received, details of expenses paid and the characteristics of the workforce. Initial data from the survey are expected to be available on-line in July 2008, from the ABS website www.abs.gov.au.