

Implementing a Community-based Chronic Disease Self-Management Support Centre

A guide based on the experience from the 'In Our Hands' Health Information and Resource Centre



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EPDGP

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Implementing a Community-based Chronic Disease Self-Management Support Centre

Purpose

This guide provides a framework for the establishment of a volunteer-led community resource centre similar in structure to the 'In Our Hands' Health Information & Resource Centre in Whyalla. This guide is aimed at volunteer groups, community health workers or health services that are considering developing a peer education service to support patient education in self-management. Self-management in this implementation guide refers to *chronic disease self-management* but a program could just as easily incorporate a more holistic view of health by including information about screening, immunisation, primary prevention, and other health promoting activities.

The advice offered in this guide comes from five years of experience in planning, developing and maintaining the 'In Our Hands' Health Information & Resource Centre in Whyalla.

Introduction

The 'In Our Hands' Health Information & Resource Centre at Whyalla

Sharing Health Care was a federally-funded initiative with eight demonstration projects across Australia that commenced in 2001. The projects aimed to test self-management models in a variety of settings and to evaluate the outcomes. The South Australian project, named 'Our Health in Our Hands in Our Region,' was based in several regional centres around Eyre Peninsula; including Port Lincoln, Whyalla, and Port Augusta. The model that was evaluated in Whyalla and is described here was the Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and the main support elements of the program were peer education and volunteer management. The aim of the Whyalla component of the SA project was to develop a community-based peer education model of chronic disease self-management.

Community consultation identified the need for a local centre where health information could be easily accessed by everyone without the need for an appointment with a health professional. This began a process of planning and negotiating with local stakeholders and community groups to develop a community-based health information centre. A local Whyalla General Practitioner (Dr Jerome Connolly) donated empty shop premises which were modestly refitted with new carpet and a coat of paint. The centre began by providing a broad range of publicly available health-related educational resources about chronic conditions, such as diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, respiratory diseases, cardiovascular disease, and depression. The resources, available on a range of media, were sourced from various government and non-government organisations and displayed at the resource centre. Information about other chronic diseases, such as Parkinson's disease, was sourced if requested by clients.

The centre was officially launched on May 15, 2002 and, by then, was staffed by local volunteers who had trained as Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Leaders. Since 2002, service provision has gradually broadened to include peer education programs, physical activity opportunities for older people (Tai Chi and basic resistance training), programs aimed at improving the mental health of older people, falls prevention, the prevention and management of osteoporosis, and an arthritis management course.

The Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, a generic self-management program, has been the foundation on which all other programs have been successfully built.



Section 1: Planning

Preparing the project plan

All projects have timelines and deadlines regarding reports and evaluations, and guidelines for financial auditing and other activities. It is important to find out what these are before starting and to develop a project plan that complies with all requirements. One should start to think about a “mission statement” that reflects what the project seeks to achieve, the over-arching aim of the project.

The project plan should include the following elements, be written clearly, and use as little jargon as possible:

- **Aims:** The aims of the project will be determined by a number of factors. The following questions could be considered in order to develop the project aims: What is the project about exactly? What is its scope? Is it simply about community-based self-management, like the Stanford course? Or, is it broader, including health promoting activities and physical activities, such as Tai Chi? Is it a project developed by the local health service or a non-government organisation? One must know exactly what the aims are to make sure the project stays on track.
- **Strategies employed to work towards aims:** These are action-oriented statements that describe exactly what needs to happen to achieve the project aims.
- **Measure:** These could include outcomes, deliverables, and performance measures. Basically, one should consider how impacts and outcomes will be measured.
- **Responsibility:** Who is responsible for ensuring particular actions are completed?
- **Timeframe:** The timeframe should include intermediate milestones and completion dates.

Examples of project plan templates can be found on the CD-ROM included in this resource kit.

When developing the project plan, there are a number of different issues to be considered. The following list can serve as an initial guide but will need to be adjusted to suit a particular context. A specific project plan checklist is available on the CD-ROM.

- preparation for volunteer management coordination
- building the organisation
- marketing and promotion
- evaluation
- documentation and statistics
- community network building
- budget
- venue
- recruitment of staff and volunteers

Preparing for volunteer management

Volunteers need to be managed in the same way as employees to ensure that they contribute their skills and knowledge in a meaningful and rewarding way but without personal risk. More information about volunteer management can be found in Volunteering SA's manual: *Volunteer Management, An Essential Guide* by Joy Noble and Louise Rogers.

More information about volunteering is available at:

- http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s01_home/home.asp
- <http://www.volunteering.sa.org.au/>
- http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/management_main.jsp

Building the organisation

Consideration needs to be given to risk assessment (insurance, liabilities, security, privacy) and to legislative requirements. Governance and management structures needed to sustain the project in the long-term and should be established early in the project. This includes specification of roles and responsibilities, policies, procedures and job descriptions.

Consider forming a volunteer working party right from the beginning to ensure that they are involved in the planning and decision-making processes. Doing so will instil a sense of ownership and ongoing commitment. Initially, this working party will need to meet fortnightly as there will be a great deal to be achieved, but this should later settle into regular monthly meetings. An example of a working party action plan template is available on the CD-ROM.

Promoting and marketing

Start to think about an identity: name, badging, logo, corporate image, and ideas for promotion. The name of the project needs to be something that is relevant to the aims, easy to remember, and not full of jargon. 'Living well with long-term health problems' might be more acceptable than 'Improving quality of life for people with chronic disease,' which sounds fine to a health professional, but may not be clear to someone who misunderstands the term chronic disease.

Acronyms can be good, but need to be used carefully as they can be very confusing and the public is becoming increasingly unimpressed by acronyms unless they are well known and skilfully marketed.

There is a large amount of evidence that supports the benefits of self-management. Collect as much of this information as possible and use it to develop a marketing strategy that is appropriate for the target audience.

Planning for the collection of data

One should ask the following questions: What statistics will need to be collected? What does the funding body or supervising organisation require with regard to data and information? Is it necessary to count every person who walks through the door as well as every person who rings for information or attends a course, activity, or meeting? Will these statistics be recorded in a book, on a sheet or directly entered into a spreadsheet? How much detail is required? Do you want to know, for instance, how many clients are over 50 and female?

Commence the collection of information immediately, document everything, and take a digital camera to every meeting, function, or event. A data collection checklist is available on the CD-ROM.

Planning an evaluation strategy

Start to think about evaluation early in the life of the project. What is the project trying to achieve and what is the best way to measure this achievement? An overall program evaluation plan will need to be developed, along with specific tools for the various activities. Make sure there is a generic evaluation form readily available for activities such as information sessions, volunteer training, and volunteer recruitment sessions. The feedback from these sessions will provide information to improve the activities.

Examples of evaluation forms are available on the CD-ROM.

Building community networks

There is a multitude of ways to build networks, but keeping these networks active requires constant effort. Doing so is worthwhile, however, as the level of success of the project is often proportional to the level of networking that has occurred. The following are methods that proved useful in the Sharing Health Care SA project for developing community networks.

- Create a stakeholder list and update it when necessary. As you make the list, make contact with people who represent the various groups and enquire whether they know of any other people or groups who may also be interested. Ensure that you have the telephone numbers, email addresses, website addresses, and any other relevant information. You must show an interest in their organisation if you wish to foster their interest in your project.
- It is also very important to avoid competing with other organisations that provide similar services to the one you are developing. Offer to work together, and share resources if appropriate.
- Target community leaders who may have a vested interest in the project, and particularly those who may be offended if they are not invited to be involved.
- Use the stakeholder list and continue to build these relationships. This may mean visiting, providing information, or attending meetings.
- Develop partnerships with key stakeholder groups that have a vested interest in the project; e.g., the Arthritis Foundation SA.
- Do not hesitate to develop working partnerships - don't wait for the project to be in full swing or you may miss your opportunity. Offer incentives like free advertising, free services for their members, project partnership status, and anything else appropriate for the situation.
- Subscribe to mailing lists from government and non-government organisations for relevant information.
- Tap into all relevant health networks: get invited to meetings and forums and talk about the project; build interest and keep people informed.
- Involve the community from the earliest planning stages. Foster community ownership. Remember that health professionals are also part of the community.
- Contact community groups. Request permission to be a guest speaker. Be early, however, as they often plan their programs well in advance.



Establishing a budget

It is important to be fully aware of budget parameters and to work within them. Considerable investment may be required early in the project to establish the centre and to purchase resources.

A budget line for volunteer costs is needed. Volunteers should not be forced to incur out-of-pocket expenses for project-related activities, and systems need to be in place to ensure that volunteers can claim reimbursement for any expenses incurred.

Selecting a location

The location of the centre is likely to be determined by availability and the level of funding. Few organisations can justify separate premises for this type of project, and may have to share an existing building that is already used for related activities. While a separate community-based centre is preferable, there are hospital-based models where a room or alcove in a main corridor is set aside for health information, a bulletin board for community events, and a computer with Internet access. A volunteer may attend only at certain times of the week to help with promotion or recruitment of clients to upcoming self-management courses and other events. Security issues may dictate that the 'self-management corner' will only be available to the general public when a volunteer is present.

If a separate location is used, security precautions, including appropriate alarm systems should be considered.

Recruiting

Project Staff

The scope of the project will determine the type of project staff needed. Someone with a health background might be valuable but would not be necessary if the role only involved coordinating volunteer activities rather than providing health-related education. Interpersonal and communication skills will be required.

Volunteers

To recruit volunteers, use the stakeholder list and invite people to take part, and don't be shy about asking people who are already busy volunteering for other organisations. These are the busy people that are needed to build a great project. They are often the most organised and experienced volunteers, happy to support the development of a new group, to pass on their skills and, strangely enough, they seem to relish more work. Sell the idea to potential volunteers with energetic enthusiasm. Remember - "Enthusiasm is infectious!" (Kate Lorig).

Section 2: Implementing

Collecting resources

What is available? What is needed?

The necessary resources may include:

- **Material Resources:**
Computer, printer, and modem for Internet access; filing cabinets, desks, chairs (office and stacking), bookcases, and pamphlet holders; a kettle, microwave, small fridge, crockery and cutlery, tea towels, washing up and other cleaning equipment; tea, coffee, sugar, sweeteners, and biscuits in appropriate containers. Other resources will need to be developed to support promotion and marketing, booking and loan systems, volunteer applications, induction, training, and ongoing management.
- **Funding:**
At the development stage of the project, funding agreements may be inflexible and tied to the purchase of specific equipment. It is important to plan ahead and investigate future funding opportunities. Do not wait until the money has run out! Local, state, and federal governments all have annual grants available, as do non-government organisations, such as the Heart Foundation and other not-for-profit organisations.
- **Volunteers are the most valuable resource.** The application form (available on the CD-ROM) has a small section that allows for an initial assessment of skills, but this can be broadened in order to assess skills, experience, and abilities: both real and potential, after the volunteer has been working for the organisation for a short time. The project will need peer educators and other volunteers who may be involved to ensure the smooth running of the centre and the courses. Some of the volunteers will require public speaking skills to facilitate self-management courses while others will require computer skills. At the end of this skills assessment process, the training requirements will have been identified.

Health Information

There is a large amount of health-related information available, but it is not all reliable or current. Be wary of information on the Internet. It is important to obtain information from reputable sites and organisations. Generally, when searching the web, sites that end in .edu (education), .gov (government), or .org (organisation - usually a foundation or other non-government organisation) can be trusted to provide reliable information.

The following organisations can be contacted to provide printed information, but some charge a small fee per fact sheet, so choose wisely. Others may ask for a donation. Most will provide a resource list for the future orders:

- Heart Foundation
- Diabetes SA
- Diabetes Australia
- Cancer Council
- Asthma Foundation
- Arthritis Foundation
- Quit

Other government and non-government organisations may be sources of information. The following list provides a starting point:

- Healthinsite: <http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/>
- Department of Health and Ageing: <http://www.health.gov.au/>
- Indigenous Health: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/Indigenous+Health-1lp>
- Healthy for Life: <http://www.health.gov.au/healthyforlife>
- Medicare: <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/>
- Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/Publishing.nsf/Content/Pharmaceutical+Benefits+Scheme+\(PBS\)-1](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/Publishing.nsf/Content/Pharmaceutical+Benefits+Scheme+(PBS)-1)
- Commonwealth Carelink Centre: <http://www9.health.gov.au/ccsd/>
- Department of Health SA: <http://www.health.sa.gov.au/>
- Healthy SA: <http://www.healthysa.sa.gov.au/>
- Northern Territories Chronic Disease Network: <http://www.nt.gov.au/health/cdc/preventable/chronicdisease.shtml>
- Healthinfonet: <http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/>
- Local Health Services
- Communicare
- Centrecare
- Centrelink
- Service SA
- Support Groups
- Carers Australia

Promoting and marketing

Paper-based promotional materials

At this stage, it would be prudent to develop the resources needed to promote the centre and its activities. These might include flyers, posters, and pamphlets outlining the purpose of the centre, plus others outlining specific activities, such as the Stanford self-management course. Develop and distribute a referral form to local GP surgeries and health services along with the promotional material to provide an avenue for easy referral to centre activities. Visiting GP surgeries and chatting to receptionists and practice nurses, while delivering these materials, develops relationships with people who are in a position to recommend the centre's services. Examples of promotional material are available on the CD-ROM.

Web-based promotion

Developing a website for the organisation is advantageous. The 'In our Hands' website, www.inourhands.com.au, provides an example of a community-developed website which contains a large variety of self-management and health-related resources and links.

Setting up a website may appear to be a daunting and costly exercise, but the experiences of the volunteers at 'In Our Hands' have proven otherwise. The cost can be minimal if the current Internet Service Provider is used as a host. Most allow 20MB of web space, and you can use templates they provide. The software 'FrontPage' is part of Microsoft Office and includes step-by-step instructions on developing and maintaining a website. Alternatively, if you can use Publisher or Word, you can publish your document as a website. There are many web-hosting services available that provide templates and so forth - the only problem is that they usually insist that some advertising appear on your page. A Google search would be the best way of finding these free services: <http://www.google.com.au/>.

Effective websites require regular updating.

Advertising and using the Media

Make use of one's networks to advertise upcoming events, courses, and classes. Other advertising could be via community announcements or classified ads in the local newspaper, on radio or television. Flyers placed in clients' bags at the chemist, flyers on community notice boards, notices in community groups newsletters, health service calendars of events and newsletters, email flyers, letters sent to local GPs and other private health professionals are all possible. Knowing the community and the means of information dissemination will be helpful in raising the awareness of upcoming events and courses.

Launching the project

Publicity

Select and utilise the most appropriate advertising techniques leading up to the launch so that public awareness of the event is ensured. Invitations and advertising should incorporate an RSVP and contact number if the number of people attending is needed for catering purposes. Cater for a few extra just in case more turn up on the day.

Invitations

Consider inviting all stakeholders, all volunteers, local members of parliament, the local mayor and councillors, and representatives of local businesses and health services. The invitations need to be smart and relatively formal, but not too decorative, and they must contain the information required to get people to the right place at the right time on the right date. Include a synopsis or other promotional material of the organisation.

Promotional material

Distribute the promotional material you have developed at the launch, making sure there is an ample supply available for people to take and later display in their practice or business. Put a collection of promotional material in a 'show bag.' Paper bags with string handles are cheap and it is easy to apply relevant logos or information. If the budget allows, pens, fridge magnets, calendars, bookmarks and key rings, with appropriate badging could be purchased, to promote the project and centre.

Catering

Cater appropriately for the time of day, ensuring there is a variety of foods for different tastes, chronic conditions and cultures. Finger foods work best and avoid messy sauces or dips. Encourage networking by eliminating any barriers to people mingling. Provide appropriate refreshments for the time of the year and plenty of cool water in summer. Self-management advocates healthy eating so endeavour to set an example.

See the Australian Guide to Health Eating

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/Publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-food-guide-index.htm>

Training

It is important that the volunteer coordinators and any other project staff are involved in training the volunteers. This will build relationships and strengthen teamwork. Project staff may need to be trained in volunteer management. The Council of the Ageing (COTA) provides an introduction to peer education that covers many aspects of managing peer educators.

'*Volunteer Management: An Essential Guide*' is an excellent resource and is recommended. More information is available from: <http://www.wavolunteeringessentials.org.au/>

The NHMRC publication '*Working with Volunteers and Managing Volunteer Programs in Health Care Settings*' is available from <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/nh48.htm>.

There are a range of other options for training volunteers and project staff that includes:

- peer education (general)
- Stanford leaders training
- public speaking
- computer skills
- public relations
- Tai Chi
- Easy Moves for Active Ageing (EMAA)

Training that incorporates the first three from the list above will provide the foundation on which many different types of peer education can be developed. The generic nature of the Stanford program provides the basis to build disease-specific or topic-specific health education into a holistic program that will be relevant to many people in the community.

Varying levels of computer skills will be required by volunteers and suitable training should be arranged.

As volunteers will be dealing with clients on a daily basis, they may need interpersonal relationship training, including answering the telephone and greeting clients who enter the centre. Basic communication skills such as listening and paraphrasing may also need to be taught.

Tai Chi leaders' training is rarely available locally and, if local training is not possible, travel and accommodation costs will need to be considered. Different Tai Chi leader courses are available and include:

- Tai Chi for Arthritis
- Tai Chi for Back Pain
- Tai Chi for Diabetes

More information about training requirements and upcoming events can be found at <http://www.taichiproductions.com/>

EMAA is an Active Ageing Australia initiative that aims to provide a safe and effective physical activity and exercise program to help people remain active as they age. One must complete a two-day course to train as an EMMA instructor, and more information is available from the Active Ageing website, <http://www.activeageingsa.net.au/emma.html>.

Other peer education training opportunities include:

- Prevention and Management of Osteoporosis
- Arthritis Self-management
- Falls Prevention available from Council on the Ageing (COTA),
- Just Walk it Leaders training
- 'Foodies' (in partnership with dieticians of the local health service)
- Maturity Blues (COTA and Beyond Blue initiative to raise awareness of depression in older people)
- Obesity Prevention Program: a peer education program targeting parents and grandparents

It is important to encourage volunteers to actively seek training and development opportunities and to also deliver regular training and updates around contemporary topics.

There are many other peer education programs around that have been developed by a variety of health professionals, community groups, and universities. A comprehensive list of the peer education programs available in Australia is available at <http://www.cota.org.au/>, or <http://www.cotasa.org.au/>.

Considering corporate issues

Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures need to be developed and presented to volunteers and project staff. Even the smallest organisation needs policies surrounding issues such as:

- occupational health, safety and welfare
- incident accident injury policy and report form
- workplace bullying
- safe use equipment
- risk assessment & management
- hazard policy
- hazard report form
- hazard control checklist
- privacy principles
- drug and alcohol use by volunteers and clients
- use of the computer and the Internet
- use of material resources for example paper and other stationary
- procedures for management of petty cash and documentation of expenditure for the day to day running of the centre
- volunteer job description, roles, and responsibilities
- security procedures
- dealing with difficult clients

Examples of the above policies and procedures are provided on the CD-ROM and are available from various government services. They will need to be adapted to suit the local context.

Incorporation

Incorporation is a means of establishing a legal entity. It is especially suitable for small, community-based groups and may provide a limited liability for members. Incorporation allows the group to be more independent, with rights to apply for all types of grants and funding. The process may seem arduous but there is help to be found at <http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au/Associations/>.

The hardest part is likely to be writing the constitution, and the easiest way to do this would be to find an organisation that has gone through the process of incorporation and is willing to share their constitution. If possible, find a group that has a similar structure, function and goals, borrow their constitution, and adapt it as required. More information about taxation and incorporated groups is available from <http://www.ato.gov.au/nonprofit/>.

The Office for Volunteers is the leading government agency for volunteering in SA and provides all essential information regarding legislation affecting the volunteer sector, as well as information regarding government policy, incorporation, insurance, and privacy principles. More detailed information is available at: <http://www.ofv.sa.gov.au/policy.htm>.

Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Act 2002

The Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Act 2002 was proclaimed on January 1, 2003.

Through the Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Act 2002:

- Someone who is volunteering for an organisation and operates in good faith when doing community work and within the organisation's guidelines has some protection from liability.
- The intent is that the liability will transfer to the community organisation with which they are involved.

More information and fact sheets are available as from:

http://wacoss.org.au/images/assets/wave_2006/vol_insurance_and_legal_issues_2006.pdf.

Insurance

Organisations should make sure they have the appropriate insurance to cover their assets and activities. At a minimum, this should include Public Liability Insurance, but may extend to:

- Personal Accident Insurance
- Directors and Officers Insurance
- Professional Indemnity: This is needed if the activities conducted by the volunteers warrant professional indemnity. This may be covered if the volunteer organisation becomes closely affiliated with a health service or similar large organisation that already has professional indemnity insurance for its members.
- Property Insurance (including fire and theft)

Consult an insurance broker before making decisions about insurance cover as they can assess the insurance needs of the organisation. More information is available from:

http://wacoss.org.au/images/assets/wave_2006/vol_insurance_and_legal_issues_2006.pdf.



Section 3: Maintaining momentum and establishing sustainability

Maintaining the volunteer organisation requires an on-going commitment.

Obtaining funding

It can be difficult to secure ongoing funding for day-to-day running costs; however, there are usually several opportunities per year for one-off grants for special projects. Use a working group to generate and agree on fund-raising ideas. The following links may be useful.

- <http://www.grantslink.gov.au/>
- <http://www.grantsmartsa.com.au/>
- <http://www.service.sa.gov.au/grants.asp>
- http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/funding_main.jsp
- <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/sp/spgrants.htm>
- <http://www.grants.ord.sa.gov.au/search.html>

Promoting the project

Television advertising is more expensive than using other media, but may be more effective in reaching a wider audience. There are limited opportunities for funding advertising. The 'In Our Hands' community group obtained a grant from the local Division of GP to fund a 12 month advertising campaign. A copy of the advertisement is on the CD-ROM.

Utilise local promotion opportunities, including:

- health service expos
- local trade shows
- displays in local libraries
- a diary of community events in local paper radio
- other organisations' newsletters; for example, support groups, community health centres, local church groups etc.

Developing the program

Holding regular half-day planning meetings for all volunteers is a great way to keep everyone involved and up-to-date with the development of the centre and to generate new ideas.

Schedule monthly meetings of working groups and allocate tasks and duties according to their skills.

Look after the volunteers: have regular social events, regular training sessions and updates, always involve them in major decision making, have regular planning days, and provide lunch (once every six months seems to work). Don't forget to plan for succession. Encourage multi-skilling in volunteers and continually develop skills.

Recruiting new volunteers

Being an incorporated body means the organisation can register with a range of organisations that can refer potential volunteers. Volunteering SA will refer potential volunteers without the need for incorporation. It is important to ensure that the community organisation complies with all requirements of the referring organisation and provides the volunteers with training.

Centrelink

Registering with Centrelink provides the opportunity to recruit older people who have mutual obligation agreements to do volunteer work. They are usually required to complete a certain number of volunteer hours per week depending on their circumstances, their age, and how long they have been out of the workforce. These volunteers are generally reliable and often have a variety of skills to enrich the volunteer skill base.

Work for the Dole

Registering for 'Work for the Dole' can be an effective volunteer recruitment strategy. Registration to receive potential volunteers is via local service providers, such as Mission Australia or other employment agencies that are authorised for the 'Work for the Dole' program. Volunteers recruited in this way may only be available short-term, as they must be actively looking for work, but while they are part of the organisation they are a stable presence because they need to fulfil their 'Work for the Dole' obligations.

Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services (CRS)

These volunteers will be recovering from a work injury; therefore, it is very important to be aware of their limitations and assign voluntary duties accordingly.

Volunteering SA

Volunteering SA has a web-based database of organisations looking for volunteers. Registering with them may provide another source of volunteers.

It is important to keep up-to-date with changes in any of these programs. Some of the organisations that refer volunteers will give notice of any changes; however, be proactive and ask the respective volunteers for any relevant paperwork.

Managing volunteers

VOA Number

Obtaining a Volunteer Organisation Authorisation Number (VOAN) will assist the organisation to freely access police checks for its volunteers. Police checks are part of the risk management and screening processes organisations can use to ensure a safe environment. The government is currently meeting the cost of police checks for volunteers who work with vulnerable groups, such as children, the aged and frail, or people with a disability.

To obtain this benefit, eligible organisations need to apply through SA Police at http://www.sapolice.sa.gov.au/sapol/services/information_requests/national_police_certificate/volunteer_organisation_authorisation_number_voan.jsp.

Volunteer Social Events

It is important to recognise the efforts and contribution of volunteers through various social events and celebrations. Opportunities to do this include:

- Volunteer Week
- The anniversary of the centre or project
- Christmas
- community fund-raising events; e.g., Biggest Morning Tea

Additional Information

- <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/>
- <http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/>
- <http://www.raplink.org.au/>
- <http://www.communitynet.sa.gov.au/>
- <http://www.wowguide.com.au/>



