WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION TO THE FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO THE
INVOLVEMENT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE BUSINESSES IN
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

JUNE 2008

The purpose of this document is to provide factual information and data to assist the
Parliamentary Inquiry in its deliberations.

The document contains and refers to information collected from Victorian
Government departments by the Department of Planning and Community
Development on a range of Victorian Government policy settings and initiatives
relevant to the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry.

The submission’s appendices include a list of acronyms referred to in the document.
This section outlines Victorian Government policy relevant to the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry.

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PART 1: VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY CONTEXT

This section outlines Victorian Government policy relevant to the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry into the involvement of small and medium size businesses in corporate social responsibility.

1.1 GROWING VICTORIA TOGETHER

In 2001, the Victorian Government outlined its vision for making Victoria a stronger, more socially responsible and innovative State in Growing Victoria Together (GVT). GVT set out ten goals that would inform Government’s work over the next ten years:

- More quality jobs and thriving innovative industries across Victoria;
- Growing and linking all of Victoria;
- High quality accessible health and community services;
- High quality education and training for lifelong learning;
- Protecting the environment for future generations;
- Efficient use of natural resources;
- Building friendly, confident and safe communities;
- A fairer society that reduces disadvantage and respects diversity;
- Greater public participation and more accountable government; and
- Sound financial management.


Goals outlined in GVT relevant to the Inquiry include a commitment to: more quality jobs and thriving innovative industries across Victoria; growing and linking all of Victoria; building friendly, confident and safe communities; and a fairer society that reduces disadvantage and respects diversity.

All Victorian Government departments play a role in the implementation of GVT.

1.2 A FAIRER VICTORIA

A Fairer Victoria (AFV), first released in 2005, is the Government’s long term plan to address disadvantage through the development of innovative and evidence-based initiatives.

AFV is underpinned by five principles:

1. Ensuring that universal services provide equal opportunity for all – making sure government services meet the needs of disadvantaged groups, individuals and communities, with a particular focus on the critical transition points in life;
2. Reducing barriers to opportunity – acting to reduce the barriers that prevent people gaining opportunities for a better life and strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities in order to increase their choices and control over life’s opportunities;
3. Strengthening assistance to disadvantaged groups – in recognition of their need for targeted additional support, introducing innovative approaches to help disadvantaged groups access services and opportunities available to other members of the Victorian community;
4. Providing targeted support to the highest risk areas – directing effort and resources towards addressing disadvantage where it is concentrated in particular locations and supporting a coordinated approach in these areas, involving all levels of government, non-government agencies and local communities; and

5. Empowering communities by making it easier to work with Government – implementing new ways of working directly with communities and streamlining the delivery of services across different levels and functions of government.

AFV 2008: Strong People, Strong Communities has made investment of $1.0158 billion in four key areas: helping children to get the best start, assisting young people to get the best education and a secure job, improving the health outcomes of disadvantaged Victorians and building stronger and more resilient communities.

There has been four years of significant investment since the strategy was first released in 2005. Including the funding committed in 2008, the total investment in AFV totals more than $4 billion.

AFV is founded upon a strong commitment to expand place-based approaches, and to working in partnership with local governments, the community sector, businesses and local communities. AFV also included a commitment to develop community enterprises and to increase involvement of business in the community.

AFV 2007 achievements that are of particular relevance to the inquiry include the following:

• $3 million to support community–owned non–profit businesses that increase opportunities for disadvantaged people to obtain jobs and vocational skills and increase community and social connections; and
• $6 million to continue supporting volunteering activities around Victoria and extend the Community Bus Program.

www.dpcd.vic.gov.au

All Victorian Government departments play a role in the implementation of AFV.

1.3 THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT’S ACTION PLAN: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The Victorian Government’s Action Plan: Strengthening Community Organisations (the Action Plan), released 9 April 2008, supports the sustainability of non-profit organisations to enable their continued contribution to the economic and social life of Victoria.

The Action Plan responds to two reviews, the Stronger Community Organisations Project (SCOP); and the Review of Not-for-Profit Regulation led by the State Services Authority.

The Action Plan sets out 25 actions to be taken by Government, under five theme areas:

1. Reducing the regulatory burden and streamlining interaction with government;
2. Building the capacity of community organisations;
3. Supporting innovation and growth;
4. Enhancing the role of NFPs in local community life; and
5. Recognising community organisations and coordinating effort across government.

www.dpcd.vic.gov.au

1.4 MELBOURNE 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth

*Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth* (Melbourne 2030) is the Victorian Government’s 30 year plan to manage growth and change across metropolitan Melbourne and the surrounding region. It emphasises the city’s interdependence with regional Victoria, to provide maximum benefit to the whole State.

The main thrust of *Melbourne 2030* is to continue to protect the liveability of the established areas and to increasingly concentrate major change in strategic redevelopment sites such as activity centres and underdeveloped land. Implementation of the policy through the Department of Planning and Community Development will include a focus on:

- Better Planning, Urban and Regional Development;
- Increased Participation and Engagement; and
- Growth and Fairness

http://www.dse.vic.gov.au

1.5 VICTORIA: LEADING THE WAY

*Victoria: Leading the Way* (released 20 April 2004) is a key economic statement that aims to make Victoria a competitive force in the global marketplace.

The statement outlines the Government's priority actions to strengthen Victoria's performance in exports, investment and business growth. These measures support Victoria's strong economic growth, and contribute towards generating more jobs and thriving, innovative industries across the state.


The Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD) is the Victorian Government's lead agency for economic and regional development. It is charged with fostering more quality jobs and thriving, innovative industries across Victoria. DIIRD’s strategic objective is to support and nurture a dynamic, innovative and sustainable Victorian economy in which business is encouraged to grow and prosper. DIIRD has a strong focus on investment, jobs and exports, and also supports small business, through its Office of Small Business (Business Support Division)

The Office of Small Business facilitates the establishment, operation and growth of businesses by:

- Providing coordinated and accessible information;
Facilitating the delivery of programs that develop the skills of small business operators; and
Developing and advocating policies to promote a business environment that is conducive to small business growth.

1.6 TIME TO THRIVE: SUPPORTING THE CHANGING FACE OF VICTORIAN SMALL BUSINESSES

Time to Thrive: Supporting the Changing Face of Victorian Small Businesses (Time to Thrive) (2006) was developed following extensive consultation with the small business sector. This ensured future Government policies will continue to meet the needs of small businesses.

The initiatives contained in Time to Thrive focus on four main themes to ensure Victorian small businesses thrive and to reinforce the Government’s belief that enterprise and innovation should be encouraged and celebrated. The four themes are:

1. More time for business;
2. Skilling small business for growth;
3. A fairer deal for small business; and
4. Cutting the cost of doing business.

The initiatives aim to assist all Victorian small businesses: start ups, home based businesses, established businesses and independent contractors.


1.7 MOVING FORWARD IN PROVINCIAL VICTORIA

Moving Forward in Provincial Victoria (Moving Forward) (2005) is the Victorian Government's blueprint to help provincial Victoria attract the people, ideas, investment and businesses it needs for a prosperous future. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) continue to be large contributors to the economy of provincial Victoria, providing a range of job opportunities and contributing to the diversification of regional economies.

Initiatives of potential relevance to the Inquiry’s terms of reference include:

- A Provincial Victoria Growth Fund to support activities and projects that are designed to drive population, investment and business growth, with priority funding for collaborative projects;
- The creation of a Small Towns Victoria group, which will work closely with local councils, business and community groups to develop projects in small towns, provide advice to Government on matters affecting small towns, and assist in marketing and promotion strategies to attract people and investment to small towns;
- Community Enterprise Grants to councils and community or business organisations to help small towns establish community-managed enterprises to replace lost commercial services, provide new services or create new uses for underused or empty commercial buildings;
- An Investment Partnerships Program, whereby investment teams will work in partnership with local councils, businesses, community groups and agricultural producers to develop projects to the point where financing can be sought from private sector investors and Commonwealth and State funding sources;
• A new Provincial Leaders program to support local initiatives that assist regional business and community leaders, with a strong focus on encouraging younger leaders;
• A Provincial Victoria Buy Locally program that will encourage businesses and organisations to source and purchase products from within their local communities and regions; and
• Targeted bush tender projects that seek competitive tenders from land holders to improve native vegetation on their land. The program has successfully led to improved salinity and water quality, enhanced biodiversity and economic opportunities for farmers and associated service industries.


1.8 GO FOR YOUR LIFE

The ‘Go for your life’ Strategic Plan 2006-2010 reinforces the Government’s commitment to continuing to improve the health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

The Strategic Plan provides a framework for Government to respond to the growing obesity and diabetes type 2 epidemics. It identifies a range of programs and activities that are focused on particular population groups, including activities designed to create communities, structures and environments that support healthier eating and higher levels of physical activity. It aims to promote community-wide changes as a way of encouraging Victorians to become more active and feel happier and healthier. The Strategic Plan recognises that the entire community needs to be involved, and for Government to work in close partnership with community groups, industry organisations, schools, businesses and research institutions to develop and deliver the Strategic Plan.


1.9 OUR ENVIRONMENT, OUR FUTURE: VICTORIA’S ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

Our Environment, Our Future (OEOF) (2005) provides direction for government, business and the community on building environmental considerations into the way we work and live. OEOF outlines the following:

• Key environmental challenges faced by Victoria;
• The importance of ‘environmental sustainability’;
• The strategic directions that must be pursued to become environmentally sustainable;
• Objectives to be achieved and interim targets for measuring progress towards the objectives; and
• Important steps for putting the Framework into action.

OEOF aims to ensure environmental sustainability is a fundamental consideration in everything we do to maximise future economic growth, maintain our quality of life and protect our unique environment. OEOF also seeks to support businesses to take clear actions to prevent environmental damage. It has been found that businesses that work within environmentally sustainable frameworks are gaining a competitive edge. Communities and consumers appreciate the contribution of such businesses to the liveability of Victoria and to our economic strength.
OUR WATER, OUR FUTURE

*Our Water, Our Future* (OWOF) sets out an action plan to secure Victoria’s water future over the next 50 years. OWOF is based on the following five principles:

1. Water management will be founded on an understanding that a healthy economy and society is dependent on a healthy environment;
2. Government will maintain overall stewardship of all water resources, irrespective of source, on behalf of all Victorians;
3. Water authorities will be retained in public ownership;
4. Wherever practical, customers should pay the full cost of services provided by our water systems. This includes costs associated with infrastructure, delivery and initiatives to improve the environmental friendliness of services; and
5. The water sector will be innovative and accountable to the Victorian community.

The Victorian Government aims to achieve sustainable water management through initiatives that support efficient water usage now, and which do not reduce the choices of future generations.

VICTORIAN GREENHOUSE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The *Victorian Greenhouse Strategy Action Plan Update* (2005) updates the *Victorian Greenhouse Strategy* (2002). The *Update* sets out Government policies and programs that address the issue of climate change, including: actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in government, business and households; plans to build community understanding of climate change; and strategies that will enhance the State’s capacity to adapt to a changing climate.

Climate change will have an increasingly significant impact on Victoria’s environment, communities and business. The *Update* identifies six action areas:

1. Positioning Victoria for a low carbon future;
2. Communities shaping their future through action on abatement and adaptation;
3. Transforming urban areas for sustainability;
4. Adapting to a changing climate;
5. Reducing net emissions from land management in rural Victoria; and

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN VICTORIA


Adult Community Education (ACE) programs provide lifelong learning opportunities for Victorian adults, which contribute to their social, economic, and cultural development as individuals and members of the Victorian community. ACE programs provide better links between education providers, businesses and communities, by
involving people in learning for the purposes of gaining employment and obtaining citizenship.

The framework identifies four strategic objectives:

1. Broaden the role of adult and community education;
2. Recognise specific groups of learners;
3. Enhance the sustainability of adult community education provision; and
4. Investment in adult community education

ACE programs include:

- Vocational education and training to assist people to gain employment, return to work, or change jobs;
- Adult literacy and numeracy training, including teaching English to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Basic skills training to support work or further learning, such as communication;
- Teamwork and problem-solving;
- Victorian Certificate of Education and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning; and
- Learning and training for adults.

The framework emphasises the importance of community learning partnerships, which involves investing in situations where learning needs have been identified by a range of partners, and which focus on outcomes for learners. Business, industry, other government departments and other bodies all contribute to the partnerships.


**1.13 CREATIVE CAPACITY+**

*Creative Capacity+, Arts for all Victorians* (Creativity Capacity+) (2003) is the Victorian Government’s ten year policy framework for the arts. The policy positions the arts at the centre of the Government’s commitment to building a stronger, more sustainable community and will create a vibrant cultural life for all Victorians.

Creative Capacity+ has three goals that recognise the role of the arts in the social, economic and cultural development of Victoria:

1. Arts for all Victorians: a culture of participation;
2. On the threshold: an economy based on innovation; and
3. Creative place: a dynamic arts sector.

The following four strategies have been identified to achieve these goals:

1. Developing artists, ideas and knowledge;
2. Engaging creative communities;
3. Building creative industries; and
4. Creating place and space.

Through *Creative Capacity+* and the work of its various divisions, Arts Victoria has a key role to play in facilitating strategic partnerships between arts organisations, all levels of Government, business, the education sector, and the community, including volunteers.
1.14 BLUEPRINT FOR GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
The *Blueprint for Government Schools* identified that “excellence can only come from joint initiatives between the Government, schools and their teachers, principals and other workers, parents and other school community members”. The Blueprint notes the link to the GVT priority action - providing better links between schools, business and communities as a way of building the capability of education and training professionals and expanding options for learners.


1.15 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR THE INNOVATION ECONOMY
The *Knowledge and Skills for the Innovation Economy* statement identifies future directions for vocational education and training and for higher education. The statement notes that for institutes of Technical and Further Education (TAFEs) to be successful in the future they must work in partnership with business, industry and the community. In addition, the statement identifies the important contribution that business and industry make to Vocational Education and Training (VET) trainees and to professionals.

PART 2: RESPONSE TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

This section includes a summary of information from Government departments relevant to the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry under the following headings:

2.1 Building stronger, more liveable communities;
2.2 Current Victorian examples/initiatives of business working with governments and community;
2.3 Emerging trends: practice and research; and
2.4 Drivers and barriers for ongoing engagement of business in community issues.

Victorian Government departments work with business to meet a range of social and economic policy objectives for the citizens and communities of Victoria.

The Committee will note that the majority of CSR initiatives described in this submission involve large corporations with well developed CSR strategies. Notwithstanding this there is strong evidence that small and medium businesses are very involved in their local communities. In particular, small business sponsorship and support for local sport and sports organisations is substantial.

In considering the role of small and medium business involvement in corporate social responsibility the Committee should note the Victorian Government’s key economic statement *Victoria: Leading the Way (2004)*, which sets out the Government’s priority actions to strengthen the State’s performance in exports, investment and business growth. These measures aim to ensure strong economic growth continues into the future generating more quality jobs and thriving business across Victoria.

State Government departments use a range of approaches to influence, engage and work with businesses including:

- Cross sector partnerships;
- Encouraging volunteering (including mentoring and pro bono professional services);
- Community and social enterprise;
- Contractual mechanisms; and
- Community governance.

2.1 BUILDING STRONGER, MORE LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

The Victorian Government recognises the important role of business in building stronger communities through having a sustainable mix of assets (economic, human, natural, cultural) and establishing strong networks to maximise the use of those assets.

The community development agenda is becoming increasingly engaged in a range of issues, including encouraging innovation and economic growth, and learning and enterprise.

Interventions aimed at building stronger communities appear to work best at the smaller level of a neighbourhood, suburb, or town. Government is committed to supporting the development of local approaches and initiatives to meet local needs and help establish links between communities, businesses and government.
Successful community development strategies have been shown to correlate strongly with the creation of stronger social and civic institutions, improved well-being (lower imprisonment rates, higher levels of school completion) and increased social and economic opportunities.

In addition, the Government is developing more liveable communities by providing quality planning, support, services and infrastructure, particularly in areas of growth, high need and rapid change.

2.2 CURRENT VICTORIAN EXAMPLES AND INITIATIVES

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Regional Development (DIIRD) through the Office of Small Business provides programs and support services to small businesses to promote business growth and employment. Some programs are delivered in conjunction with Local Government Councils, business support organisations and community groups. While business development and growth is the primary focus of the sector, small businesses often have greater flexibility and are willing to consider a wide range of employment options and opportunities for people who might otherwise have difficulty gaining employment.

Some recent examples of this include:

- National Australia Bank micro-enterprise loans for people on low incomes who are not able to access normal credit to help start up businesses. This program incorporates business/financial literacy training from DIIRD and mentoring support from community groups;
- Women’s Information and Referral Exchange has worked with women-led small businesses to identify opportunities and barriers to work/family balance. Funding has been provided by Industrial Relations Victoria, supported by the OSB through representation on the steering committee;
- Enterprising Women: a community development program supported by the Community Support Fund (CSF) and Northern Migrant Resource Centre to help women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to establish and operate small businesses in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. The program offers financial literacy training and micro-credit. The Office of Small Business has participated in the Steering Committee; and
- The OSB is providing workshops on business planning to participants in the ‘Vic 1000’ program facilitated by Village Green Managed Sustainable Services. The workshops aim to assist small businesses reduce their environmental impact.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) (formerly Department of Education) is working to improve school performance and student outcomes by strengthening the relationship between business and the education sector in Victoria.

The Business Working with Education program is the primary vehicle through which DEECD works to strengthen links between the business community and education sector, with a particular emphasis on schools with students from disadvantaged communities.

DEECD delivers the Business Working with Education program in partnership with: Melbourne Cares; and The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN). Melbourne Cares is a not-for-profit initiative of The Committee for Melbourne, and acts as a ‘broker’ for a wide variety of CSR activities in Victoria. Melbourne Cares
reports that approximately 25% of their partnering businesses can be defined as ‘small to medium enterprises’ (SMEs) and that these SMEs are involved in a variety of CSR activities in the education sector.

DEECD’s partnership with Melbourne Cares is evolving, as is the supporter base of partnering businesses. Over time, it is anticipated that opportunities for SMEs to partner with education will increase as a proposed ‘needs analysis’ is developed and SMEs further develop their understanding of the needs of schools through Melbourne Cares.

ABCN is a group of national business leaders working to create positive social change through programs that engage students, educators and business people. Established in early 2005, ABCN works with needy schools to give students more support and educators more options.

The Department’s partnership with the Network is a new, and focuses on developing the leadership capacity of Victorian schools through brokering mentoring relationships between businesses and school leaders.

DPCD integrates planning with the needs of communities in high growth and high needs areas to maximise social and economic participation of people in those communities. The Victorian Government’s A Fairer Victoria (2005) included a commitment to develop community enterprises and work with the business sector, along with the community sector, to improve local outcomes. A range of cross sector partnerships have been developed with a focus on financial inclusion, the digital divide and the social and economic needs of specific population groups including indigenous, youth and senior Victorians.

Financial Inclusion

Saver Plus is a financial literacy and savings program that helps people save for either their own or their children’s education. The Government, in partnership with the ANZ Bank and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, is providing $1.35 million over three years to expand its delivery and enable an additional 1,800 Victorian families to participate.

Essentially, Saver Plus is about supporting low-income families to have the same opportunities as other Victorians and to be able to save for the goods that are important to daily life. It is operating in Frankston, Craigieburn, Richmond/Fitzroy, Mildura, Geelong (including Colac) and Ballarat.

In 2005, RMIT undertook an evaluation of the program and found that 92 per cent of participants achieved and 35 per cent exceeded their savings goal, and 12 months later 71 per cent continued to save the same amount or more. Participants also reported a number of broader benefits, such as enhanced financial well being of their families, increased self esteem and, importantly, a greater sense of connection to their community.

MoneyMinded consists of two adult financial education programs to help people develop financial skills, knowledge and confidence. MoneyMinded workshops are delivered by financial counsellors and community educators, via the Internet or through workplace intranets. The program was initiated and funded by ANZ with contributions from community sector and education experts.
In 2005 DPCD, in partnership with ANZ, supported Berry Street Victoria, a key Victorian welfare agency, to translate the ANZ’s *MoneyMinded* financial literacy training program into Arabic for delivery to the emerging Iraqi community in Shepparton. The training was delivered by Arabic speakers and supported by staff from Berry Street and the ANZ.

*No Interest Loans Scheme – Expansion*

In 2006 the Government committed $4.7 million over four years to expand and coordinate *No Interest Loan Schemes* (NILS) across Victoria, to reduce the impact of financial hardship on vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians. NILS provides low-income Victorians with access to credit for essential household items – such as a washing machine, fridge or hot water service.

The project is delivered in partnership with Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service and National Australia Bank (NAB), with the NAB providing $3.3 million in NILS loan capital.

*Youth Foundations Victoria*

*Youth Foundations Victoria* is a four year initiative to be established in 15 communities in 2006-2009 to enable young people in disadvantaged communities to drive local social and community development activities. Young people from Laverton, Upper Yarra and parts of Geelong will be the first to trial the initiative. *Youth Foundations Victoria* is a partnership between Government, the Bendigo Bank and local community organisations.

*ICT and the Digital Divide*

In December 2004, as part of *Connecting Communities: the second wave (CC: 2nd wave)*, the Victorian Government committed an additional $9 million to support a range of initiatives aimed at increasing information and communication technology uptake in disadvantaged communities. Implementation of the policy has seen Government collaborating with the private and philanthropic sectors to deliver a range of innovative projects including:

- The *Computer for Every Child* pilot project which aims to provide computers, internet access and training for 400 families with children in years 3, 4, and 5 attending schools in Melbourne’s western metropolitan region. Partners to this project include:: Microsoft, Gandel Charitable Trust, Smorgon Steel, Helen McPherson Trust, Australian Children’s Television Foundation and Victoria University.
- Skills.net Roadshow is a mobile internet training unit working with disadvantaged communities in metropolitan and regional Victoria. The project was jointly funded by BHP and the Victorian Government.
- The *WellCONNECTED* pilot project is a partnership between the Victorian Government, Telstra Country Wide and the Royal Children’s Education Institute providing laptops for home use to students with a chronic medical condition. The project included the use of a virtual classroom.
- *Reach for the Clouds*: electronic-Atherton Community Enterprise (e-ACE) provides free computers and software, internet and intranet access to residents of the Atherton Gardens estate. The program is delivered by InfoXchange in collaboration with the Victorian Government, the City of Yarra, private companies (Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard) and not for profit agencies (Brotherhood of St
Laurence, Outreach Victoria, Jesuit Social Services). The Victorian Government provided a $820,000 Community Support Fund grant and $300,000 in funding from the Office of Housing within DHS.

**Partnerships with peak business groups**

Given the diverse and localised nature of small and medium businesses, DPCD has sought to build relationships with this sector through partnerships with peak business groups and service clubs.

In 2005 the Office of Senior Victorians provided $400,000 in funding over two years to the Victorian Employers’ Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) to conduct the *Grey Matters* project. The aim of the project was to educate and inform small and medium businesses about the role that older workers can play in their businesses. The project produced the *Grey Matters* employer kit, which assisted employers to retain, retrain and employ older workers. In 2006 VECCI sponsored the inaugural Grey Matters Employers Award in the national Diversity@work Awards, which recognised a Victorian employer who introduced practices to attract and support employees aged 45 years and older.

**Service Clubs – Rotary**

DPCD is funding the evaluation of a pilot program that tests the role Rotary Clubs, and service clubs more broadly, can play in engaging their individual members or groups of members to work on difficult social issues with community organisations. Four clubs (Melbourne, Brunswick, Brighton and Collingwood) have partnered with local agencies to address issues of homelessness, youth issues and the financial sustainability of community organisations. The final report is due in December 2007 and can be provided to the Committee.

**Encouraging Volunteering – including mentoring and pro bono professional services**

DPCD encourages business volunteering through funding and partnership support to:

- **Volunteer Support Grants**: funding to local Government and key community organisations to develop partnerships and networks between local governments, local community groups and businesses. An example is the Hobson’s Bay *Volition Project* that aims to develop partnerships between business and the community in Laverton, Altona North and Brooklyn. The project will support business to build strong employee volunteering programs and identify other ways that local business can be a strong community partner. Toyota Australia is a major partner in the project and will be working to support further business involvement through their supply chain network;

- Melbourne Cares, of which DPCD is a founding member, aims to broker and match corporate and business volunteers with community organisations;

- BacLinks (Business and Community Links) is a broker working in regional Victoria to link business volunteers with community organisations and to help regional medium businesses develop volunteering programs as part of their overall business strategy; and

- Agora Think Tank is a forum for community, business and government to research and explore ways for sectors to collaborate to tackle social disadvantage.
Neighbourhood Renewal

*Neighbourhood Renewal*, led by the Housing and Community Building Division (DHS), is a whole of government initiative that aims to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Victoria, focusing on areas with high concentrations of public housing. Small and medium sized business play an important role in supporting *Neighbourhood Renewal*.

*Neighbourhood Renewal* combines community strengthening, place management and a social investment strategy to achieve *A Fairer Victoria* objective of building stronger communities.

*Neighbourhood Renewal* brings together the resources and ideas of residents, governments, businesses and community groups to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Victoria and the rest of the State. Whole-of-government aims in this strategy include:

- Increase people’s pride and participation in the community;
- Lift employment, training and education opportunities and expand local economic activity;
- Enhance housing and the physical environment;
- Improve personal safety and reduce crime;
- Promote health and wellbeing; and
- Increase access to services and improve government responsiveness.

Localities selected for *Neighbourhood Renewal* are characterised by high levels of ‘worklessness’, where up to 60 per cent of people of working age within these communities are not working. Worklessness refers to the combined levels of unemployment and those people who are not participating in the labour market (unofficial unemployed)\(^1\).

The *Passport to Work initiative* is an example of how small to medium sized businesses have been engaged in *Neighbourhood Renewal* projects. Funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Employment Support Initiative and Hume City Council enabled Broadmeadows residents to be mentored throughout a 12-week job search program with employees from GE Finance and Pacific International. Mentors acted as role models and coached participants by providing valuable advice and feedback on their job search efforts. Mentors reinforced participants’ skills and knowledge and helped them to recognise their abilities. These projects have been very successful in re-engaging participants, with multiple barriers, that have been long-term unemployed into employment.

To date, *Neighbourhood Renewal* has connected over 4,600 unemployed people to jobs.

\(^1\) It is apparent that many unemployed people outside the labour market and not engaged or supported by the service system, would like employment if they were assisted to find the right opportunity. Melbourne City Mission’s research, ‘Give me a break! Welfare to Work – a lost opportunity’ (2006) highlighted that disadvantaged jobseekers were generally enthusiastic about the prospect of working, with many listing employment as one of their main goals.
Mental Health

In June 2000, the Victorian Attorney-General implemented a ‘pro bono’ initiative designed to increase the participation of the legal profession in the provision of not-for-profit community legal services.

In 2006, DHS funded a 2-year pilot project at the Mental Health Legal Centre to capitalise on this initiative, by creating a coordinator position to recruit, supervise, train, and mentor private solicitors to represent patients under the *Mental Health Act 1986* at Mental Health Review Board hearings. The Board is an independent tribunal that reviews the involuntary legal status of patients.

The project has the potential to improve representation rates at Board hearings, which are currently around 10 per cent. The Centre has recruited 18 solicitors from five legal firms so far and predicts that the pro bono solicitors will represent up to 150 extra people per year at Board hearings. The project is also expected to have ‘ripple’ benefits as private lawyers are exposed to issues of mental illness and develop greater knowledge and understanding.

Volunteering and Pro Bono support for Indigenous organisations

DHS has undertaken a project, ‘Changing the way we work with Aboriginal organisations’, aimed at improving service delivery outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians by supporting the capacity and sustainability of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).

One aspect of this project involved examining the tension between the principle of ‘community control’, where organisations are solely governed for and by Aboriginal people, but Board members are required to manage what have become multi-million dollar businesses. The project recommended that the Victorian Government support ACCOs to source mentors, preferably from local small and medium sized business (including community organisations), for ACCO board members. These mentors would be non-Aboriginal people willing and suitable for a long-term pro bono mentoring role with Boards as ‘critical friends’. DHS considers that people with a background in local small and medium business, including community organisations, would be well suited to this role.

Government is investigating how long-term, respectful partnerships can be established to support Aboriginal organisations. These partnerships need to be initiated by the Aboriginal partners if they are to be sustainable.

Under the Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework (VIAF), the current focus of work for the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs (MTAA) is in three priority ‘strategic areas for action’ namely: maternal health and early childhood development; numeracy and literacy; and year 12 completion or equivalent and pathways to employment.

The MTAA and Government Departments are aware of the importance of economic development and employment in reducing the significant and enduring disadvantage faced by Indigenous Victorians and both are strategic priorities under the VIAF. The private sector and the non-profit activities of the philanthropic sector are particularly important to economic development, employment and to a lesser extent, community development more broadly through efforts in education, health and social justice. It is anticipated that further work in this area and, in particular, work on a targeted
economic development and employment strategy will become a priority of the Taskforce in 2008.

Indigenous Partnerships

Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships (IEP) is a not for profit organisation which channels corporate and philanthropic resources into Indigenous development. Established in 2001, IEP works with Indigenous leaders and their organisations in the Cape York Peninsula and the Goulburn/Murray region in Victoria. IEP’s objective is to foster economic and social development, focusing on long-term, sustainable impacts that would help break the cycle of welfare dependency.

IEP seeks to develop innovative ways to arrest and breakthrough the destructive passive welfare economy by directly and indirectly building the capacity of individuals and organizations, and delivering appropriately skilled resources to priority projects. The Victorian Government provides funding, partnership and policy support to IEP’s Goulburn/Murray region project through DPCD. To date IEP has facilitated pro bono support and skilled volunteering to Shepparton based Indigenous organizations from major consulting and accountancy firms: KPMG, the Boston Consulting Group and the Allens Consulting Group. In addition, major corporations including Coles, Cisco and the ANZ have contributed financially and in kind.

Infoxchange

The Community Sector Investment Fund (DHS) was established to fund initiatives aimed at enhancing the capacity and sustainabilty of the non-government sector. One initiative involved Infoxchange, a non-government organisation which provides ICT support to individuals, not-for-profits and the community sector. Infoxchange is a fee for service provider and therefore operates in a similar manner to a small to medium size business.

Seeding funding was provided to Infoxchange to conduct an audit of information and communications technologies of ACCOs. This funding supported an innovative partnership between Government, the community sector and ACCOs in Victoria, which has resulted in a range of benefits including:

- Developing trust and mutual understanding between Infoxchange and the peak body for ACCOs, the Victorian Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations (VACCHO), and its member organisations;
- Providing a safe environment for ACCOs by ensuring the information presented to Government was non identifying but sufficiently detailed to provide a basis for innovative solutions for each participating organisation; and
- Negotiating solutions that are achievable and targeted to individual organisations and their communities.

Community and social enterprise
Community and social enterprises are not for profit enterprises that use the traditional tools of business to meet the social or environmental objectives of local communities. These enterprises principally reinvest any surpluses back into the business or into their community.

In 2004-2007 the DPCD and DHS Neighbourhood Renewal Branch developed a partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence to support the development of community enterprises that create opportunities for jobs and skills development for residents of public housing estates, and provide the context for social and community connections.

A total of 33 social enterprises have been established in Neighbourhood Renewal areas, with a further five in development. These small and medium sized enterprises provide more than 130 jobs annually, and create significantly more training and volunteer opportunities.

In addition, the DPCD Community Enterprise Strategy has supported another 50 community enterprises across Victoria. The enterprises are at varying stages of business development, with some fully trading while others are in the early stages of development. Key partners with DPCD in this initiative are the Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES), who work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community enterprises, and Social Firms Australia / Social Ventures Australia, who buy small businesses and convert these to social firms (a model of community enterprise) providing supported employment and social connections for people with a psychiatric disability.

In the context of business social responsibility community enterprises also provide an important platform for mainstream businesses to invest directly in, purchase services, or utilise these enterprises to recruit future employees.

**Contractual mechanisms**

The Public Tenant Employment Program (PTEP), based in Property Services and Asset Management in the Office of Housing (OoH), is a state-wide initiative established in response to the high level of disadvantage experienced by people who live in public housing. The objective of the initiative is to create employment for people in public housing through the inclusion of social employment clauses in OoH contracts. These contracts include property maintenance services, cleaning and gardening, grounds maintenance and security. The contractors for these services are primarily small and medium sized businesses.

The basis for the PTEP program was the recognition that public spending on the provision of housing and services could be a means of bringing non-working public housing tenants back into the workforce. To achieve this, DHS made a commitment to make employment and training a key outcome of a public housing expenditure program and incorporated this concept in the specifications of purchasing contracts.

PTEP has implemented clauses into contracts, organised the supply of labour, the provision of training and support, monitoring and reporting on progress. There are currently 58 participating employers in the PTEP program. The initiative has been operating for over two years and as at 26 June 2007 has assisted over 200 public housing tenants into ongoing full time employment.
PTEP has also established a small Indigenous cleaning enterprise in partnership with the Aboriginal Advancement League and the Darebin Enterprise Centre. This business works on OoH building sites and has been operating for over 18 months. It provides employment for four indigenous public housing tenants.

The program represents a key leverage opportunity to achieve broader social objectives with the assistance of small and medium sized businesses, by utilising the Government’s investment in housing to create employment opportunities for tenants and maximising the return on government investment. OoH is now committed to support job creation and training strategies by linking housing improvement works to employment creation (often by small and medium sized businesses).

In addition to PTEP, the OoH has also made arrangements for the delivery of the organisation’s minor works contracts by procuring landscaping and fencing services from a newly established Community Works Enterprise (CWE) Network in Neighbourhood Renewal areas across the State. There are currently 10 CWE’s operating in Neighbourhood Renewal. These CWEs are based on an intermediate labour market model, where local residents are provided with supported work and learning environments and are then transitioned into ‘other’ employment after completing a 12 month traineeship.

In 2006/07, these enterprises delivered over $3 million of works and created over 50 employment opportunities. In addition to creating local employment, these enterprises are providing businesses with a supply of skilled and work ready workers. They are also contributing to the local economy and increasing the pride of local residents by enabling meaningful involvement in the physical improvement of the neighbourhood. The expectation of these enterprises is that they diversify their income streams to include private and other government contracts into the future, with a reducing reliance on OoH works.

The OoH has also developed social procurement arrangements for the delivery of concierge services at two high rise estates in metropolitan Melbourne. The OoH is funding the delivery of a Community Contact Service enterprise that employs tenants in the provision of concierge services in the foyer areas of nine towers across these estates. This has now resulted in over 25 jobs for public housing tenants. The service has also been significantly extended to include community development and working with local council, involving all public housing tenants in a recyclable rubbish service.

Community Governance

The Victorian Government’s Community Renewal program brings residents, community organizations, local businesses and governments together via a community governance structure. This structure identifies priorities, oversees and contributes to the successful implementation of local initiatives.

The basic governance structure required to be established for community renewal designated sites includes a Steering Committee with at least 50% resident membership and a Strategic Partnership Group made up of key community stakeholders.

The main role of the Strategic Partnership Group is to mobilize resources and activities to meet community identified priorities; it is in this group that local businesses are becoming increasingly involved. For example, the Whittington
Strategic Partnership Group includes Alcoa Point Henry, who mentor a local labour hire company.

Community Building Initiative - Local Governance

The Community Building Initiative (CBI) is also a Victorian Government place-based initiative focusing on small rural towns in regional areas, the metropolitan fringe and growth corridors. The initiative aims to develop vibrant communities by encouraging local people to get actively involved in community events and activities.

The CBI projects have each established Local Steering Committees that bring together the key stakeholders, ensure integration into the broader community and drive the actual implementation of the project. The Steering Committee develops partnerships and drives practical solutions to benefit the community. Committee members include community members, local government, DPCD Local Team members, community organisations and local businesses.

Local businesses are an important partner with communities and in particular being part of the shared vision for their town. A number of CBI Local Steering Committees have local business owners as members of the team. In particular, a number of priority projects that have been identified include tourism promotion, enterprise development, service industries and streetscaping small town central business districts.

Local Steering Committees are comprised of at least 50 % community members

Neighbourhood Renewal - Local Governance

In every Neighbourhood Renewal project residents are actively involved with other stakeholders in the governance of the project and in developing local action plans. Neighbourhood Renewal uses participation in place-based planning to improve communities. Neighbourhood Renewal governance structures are established to empower and include residents so that they can shape their neighbourhood, by influencing resource allocation and government policy.

RuralAccess, MetroAccess and DeafAccess

RuralAccess, MetroAccess and DeafAccess are key initiatives of the DHS’s Disability Services Division. These initiatives involve working with local communities to create more accessible and inclusive local facilities and services (most often, these facilities and services are provided by small and medium sized businesses). There are 61 workers across the State funded through these three programs, the majority of which are based in local councils.

While Rural and Metro Access workers operate under Commonwealth and State legislative frameworks that require businesses not to discriminate against people with a disability and to provide access compliant with building standards and codes, the workers adopt a community development approach, educating businesses of the advantages of making their facilities and services more accessible and inclusive to people with a disability. These businesses play an important role in assisting Government to meet its objectives.

Rural, Metro and Deaf Access workers plan and develop projects across the full range of community infrastructure. This includes a range of projects and initiatives
which have targeted local businesses. Examples of specific projects which have engaged local businesses include:

- **Good Access is Good Business:**

- **Good Communication is Good Business**

- **Missed Business initiative**

- **Footpath Trading Policies**: see, for example

- **The Recharge Scheme** - provision of outlets in local shops and businesses which enables people to recharge electric wheelchairs and scooters
  - [www.rechargescheme.org.au](http://www.rechargescheme.org.au)

- **Inclusive Events - City of Greater Geelong and Queenscliff Shire**

- **Tourism Ambassadors initiative - City of Mildura**

- **Advice on Accessible Tourism - eg Modification of a range of information and promotional programs at Sovereign Hill to ensure access for people who are Deaf or hearing impaired**

- **Deaf Expos targeting local Field Days**
  - For further information on RuralAccess, MetroAccess and Deaf access see:

**Economic development and participation**

*Time to Thrive: Supporting the changing face of Victorian small businesses* (2006) is an action plan designed to ensure that Government policies going forward continue to meet the current and future needs of small businesses. The statement recognised the contribution of small businesses to Victoria’s economy and community – they are the glue that holds communities together, especially in regional Victoria. The Office of Small Business works with small businesses and start ups to help them grow profitable businesses. By supporting successful businesses they in turn are able to contribute to their local communities by developing skills, promoting work life balance and providing employment for marginalized people.

Economic development is also one of the strategic priorities of the Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework. The Victorian State Government’s Indigenous Business Development Strategy 2005–07, was developed and implemented by the Koori Business Network (KBN), and identifies strategies that encourage greater Indigenous participation in the state economy. Building the Economic Base phase 11 is now in the process of being developed. ‘Economic development’ takes many forms in discussion of Indigenous affairs, from business development in the real economy, community enterprise meeting a range of social/employment and cultural goals, employment and training initiatives and access to land and resources. Of those private sector partnerships that have been formed in Victoria, many relate to broadly defined economic development goals.

Some of the key opportunities presented by partnerships between Indigenous communities or businesses and the private sector include:
• Local partnerships based on mutual interests relating to employment and training;
• Local partnerships relating to development of supply chains, markets or products or resource development (such as the development of bush foods);
• Initiatives around areas of identified skill shortages particularly in regional Victoria;
• Partnerships based on development of strategic capability, including examples such as the efforts around developing Indigenous tourism experiences in the South West of the State under the Aboriginal Land and Economic Development Program (and future directions of that program); and
• Initiatives such as ‘matched giving’ programs (providing dollar matching for employees’ time, fundraising efforts and payroll giving) or volunteer programs in Indigenous community organisations or businesses that enhance understanding and skills transfer.

2.3 EMERGING TRENDS - RESEARCH

The Committee will note that a range of research reports relevant to the terms of reference of the Inquiry have been provided by DPCD. The following information has been provided by other departments and relates specifically to Indigenous issues.

The current body of research suggests that most of the companies actively involved in or seeking broad-based involvement with the Indigenous community are, in the main, larger companies or non-profits, in particular those in the professional services sector or with a significant regional presence. The Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs (MTAA) is not aware of research focussing on small or medium businesses involvement in the Indigenous community. The KBN is currently in the process of developing a new Indigenous research arm located within KBN, that will research issues relevant to small and medium size Indigenous businesses, as well as developing a range of research projects in partnership with academic institutions, and evaluating and monitoring current Indigenous economic activity in this state.


The MTAA is aware of the varied pattern of interactions between the private and philanthropic sectors and Indigenous Australians as documented in Challenges in Indigenous Philanthropy: Reporting Australian Grantmakers Perspectives (Scaife, W. Australia Journal of Social Issues, ACOSS 2006).

These interactions between the private and philanthropic sectors and Indigenous Australians include:

• Business partnerships with communities around resource and land access issues. In most cases these are between resource based companies and remote communities and as such are not prevalent in Victoria;
• Partnerships around community and social enterprise supported by some private sector involvement for non profit ends. These are often supported by various networks and peaks including Philanthropy Australia. There are some examples of these occurring in Victoria but not many involving small or medium sized businesses;
• Local community partnership efforts around employment. There are numerous isolated instances of this occurring, particularly where there are labour shortage or supply issues facing a local based industry such timber industries;
• Philanthropic support to a range of community enterprise programs and education support including scholarships;
• Business support such as provision of in kind services to volunteer workforce or matched giving programs to community or start up business enterprises. While there are isolated instances of this occurring it is an increasingly important means of skills transfer and relationship building. There are some instances of this being supported through State and Commonwealth Government efforts including the Aboriginal Land and Economic Development Program. The businesses involved in this sort of work are usually larger professional services firms or philanthropic organisations of varying forms; and
• Business support is also provided by the KBN, which provides a business support program to start up new Indigenous businesses and to support existing organisations across the State.

Broadly, the documented trends highlight how the private sector, supported by peak and Government agencies is increasingly sophisticated and strategic in determining alliances and long term partnerships, and will look to mutual benefit against a range of profit or non profit objectives. A recent report Indigenous Communities and Australian Business: Facilitating community Capacity through Business Community Partnerships by the Allen Consulting Group notes that increasing partnerships with business as a means of skills transfer and building supply chains to local economic development is favoured over other approaches, such as grant giving. However, as no data is presented on this the relative prevalence of different types of activities is largely unknown. The KBN is currently in the process of developing strategic partnerships for private sector services to support Indigenous businesses.

The Victorian Indigenous Business Directory launched by the Minister for Small Business, Minister Theophanous in April 2007, demonstrates the real growth of Indigenous small business in this state over the past 4 years, and their participation in the real economy.


The Land and Economic Development Fund delivered by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, is underpinned by the work of the Koori Business Network. The Network works with both AAV and the community to provide accurate information and data to identify potential businesses that would benefit and grow from the fund, and continuing to support the ongoing growth of those businesses.

Papers published by various international academics and presented at the 2007 International Council for Small Businesses Conference and forwarded by the Victorian Government’s Office of Small Business’ (as attached) address social entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility of small businesses in a number of countries including the US and the European Union.

2.4 DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

Barriers

Through consultation with businesses, the Victorian Government has identified a range of barriers that prevent small and medium businesses becoming involved in social responsibility.
The absence of incentives and resources to engage with disadvantaged communities has been identified as a key barrier. While larger corporations are generally more able and willing to engage in social responsibility initiatives, the capacity for small business to do so can be very limited. The resource barrier is often expressed as limited time for training and/or supervision, skill requirements, compliance costs or simply the inability to devote time to participating in broader activities within the community beyond the work place. Incentives, both financial and in-kind, offer a way of addressing these issues.

In summary, the barriers identified by Victorian Government departments include:

- Lack of recognition;
- Lack of time and resources including financial resources;
- Business pressures including growing a profit and managing cash flow;
- Lack of information on how business can engage with the community (eg. what type of role business could play or what type of contribution would be welcome and effective);
- A lack of understanding that stronger communities are better for business;
- Over burdening business with requests to contribute beyond their resources;
- Differences in motivation and values;
- Lack of organisational capability to build long lasting mutually beneficial relationships;
- Perceived cultural or political barriers to mutual understanding of motives and goals;
- Lack of business case for involvement;
- Lack of strategic alignment between need and capability or goals;
- Other business pressures including growing a profit and managing cash flow;
- Perception of more "red tape" and associated costs of compliance;
- Small businesses often see governments principally as regulators and revenue collectors, not agencies proactively and positively supporting businesses. This can make them reluctant to work with Government; and
- For indigenous businesses in particular, isolation from location in remote communities. E.g. Lake Tyers.

**Drivers**

Research suggests the drivers for business involvement in social responsibility range from principled commitment to social justice, reconciliation (Indigenous), supporting corporate social responsibility aims, to more practical interests of gaining access to markets, resources or labour. Drivers differ depending on the type of business, the location and the potential for mutual benefit between businesses and communities.

In summary, the drivers identified include:

- Altruism especially among local business leaders;
- Reward and recognition leading to improved reputation within the community (particularly local communities), including impact on consumer demand;
- Being an "employer of choice" through work practices that enhance recruitment;
- Successful examples of CSR, those which have enriched the workplace and in some cases the bottom line;
- Government requirements and/or support for CSR arrangements;
• Opportunities provided to promote businesses and their image in the local community; and
• Opportunities to improve skills in the community (eg working with TAFEs).

**Addressing Barriers**

The role of Government in supporting social responsibility can include ameliorating some of the barriers and providing access to additional support, such as training funds or licences or business development opportunities and recognition. Both State and Commonwealth government departments have also been effective in some instances in brokering relationships that otherwise might not develop.

Governments can play a key role in raising awareness of the contribution small businesses make to their local communities. For example the Victorian Government training awards include a Small Business of the Year award that recognises the contribution of small businesses in developing skills. These awards provide an important means for small businesses to raise their profile and promote their organisation.

Business involvement is dependent on: businesses being encouraged to get involved; providing incentives for involvement; having a clear understanding about the expectations of their involvement (including risks); regular feedback; reward and recognition for efforts; and the sense that their input results in an outcome. ‘Quick wins’ in the early stages and a clear understanding of the indicators of success are important to sustaining involvement over the long term. The commitment of individuals (particularly leaders) to corporate social responsibility is important, particularly given sustained involvement can often revolve around the particular interest/concerns of individuals within those businesses. Practical assistance to businesses is often needed to ensure ongoing engagement. This includes co-ordination, organising meetings, provision of information and education on relevant issues.

By way of example, OoH’s Public Tenant Employment Program adopted the following strategies for ensuring the sustainability of the program and ongoing support by the businesses involved:

• Communicate the aims of the program to all stakeholders, internal and external;
• Sensitively manage the required change process (ie. The program involved a cultural shift within contractors and internal staff);
• Begin by encouraging (rather than mandating) the recruitment of public tenants by contractors to secure support and raise awareness of the program;
• Introduce mandatory clauses to create tangible outcomes for stakeholders (these have now been generally accepted by contractors); and
• Ensure relevant contractual and legal structures are put in place (eg. Exemption from prosecution under the Trade Practices Act (Third Line Forcing) through the ACCC, advice from the Equal Opportunity Commission, Privacy compliant recording systems, support from relevant unions and a Service Agreement with the federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the state’s Job Network Agencies).

*Small Business Involvement*

Small businesses often have a more flexible approach and are willing to consider
alternative employment options such as engaging long term unemployed, part time workers or people with disabilities. Part of their marketing and promotion involves supporting local sporting and community organisations. Many also work closely with local training institutions and schools to develop the skills of their employees. As a result, small businesses make a significant contribution, particularly in regional locations.

However, the impetus for their involvement usually comes from community organisations. Small businesses are time poor and have limited resources. While they are often involved in activities that would be considered socially responsible, this is not their primary aim and usually occurs as a side effect of normal business.

Any initiatives to raise small business engagement in corporate social responsibility should focus on rewarding and recognising this contribution rather than imposing mandatory reporting requirements or any other demands. While it is often in the interests of large corporations to promote their social and environmental activities through “triple bottom line” reporting, for small businesses, this would impose a significant compliance cost and would be at odds with recent Victorian Government initiatives to cut red tape for business.
### APPENDICES

#### 4. ACRONYMS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>Active for All Abilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAV</td>
<td>Aboriginal Affairs Victoria</td>
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<td>AFV</td>
<td>A Fairer Victoria</td>
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<td>ABS</td>
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<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
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<td>Culturally and Linguistically Diverse</td>
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<td>RMF</td>
<td>Regional Management Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>RESO</td>
<td>Regional Executive Support Officer</td>
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