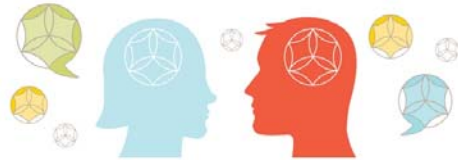


# Think Innovation 2010 Summit



## The 2010 *Think Innovation* Summit Report

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# 1. Introduction

Today, many organisations– both For-Profit and Not-For-Profit (NFP) –are called on to think more innovatively, and to show more creativity in how their business is operated. But what does innovation really mean? For many, innovation may be associated with cutting-edge technology and wide-spread change that is more likely to be seen in the highly competitive corporate world, than in the community sector. Innovation may also be seen as something that is expensive, or something that is beyond the reach of smaller organisations. The fact that the word ‘innovation’ is so commonplace in today’s language is proof that we recognise the need to look at how we operate, and see if there’s a smarter and more effective way to do things.

The reality for Victoria is that many NFP community organisations are demonstrating innovation on a daily basis. Innovation doesn’t need to involve sweeping changes to how organisations operate. Instead, to be innovative is to explore how new approaches can transform the way you work, now matter how big or small this change may be.

Victoria’s population is constantly growing and the demographics of communities is changing. NFP community organisations are adapting and evolving in response to the changing needs of the people they serve. From looking at new developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), to examining new approaches to attracting and retaining staff, Victoria’s NFP community organisations are showing how innovative thinking can improve the way the sector operates.

The Victorian Government is committed to helping foster innovation in the NFP community sector. The Office for the Community Sector (OCS) was established to work with the NFP community sector to create community organisations that are responsive, innovative and successful.

The 2010 *Think Innovation* Summit, held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2010 in the Docklands, provided the OCS with an opportunity to hear from the sector, and to showcase the innovative ways organisations are responding to today’s needs. This report details the ideas and discussions that took place on the day.

## 2. Overview

In 2009, the OCS held its first NFP summit, bringing together a diverse NFP community sector to discuss the future challenges it faced. For many NFP community organisations, the chance to come together to network and to discuss common issues was a rare opportunity. The differences in service delivery, size and location make Victoria's NFP community sector quite a diverse one, and the 2009 *NFP Futures* Summit was highlighted by attendees as a great way to get people together in one place to discuss what's important. Discussions in the Summit workshops indicated that many organisations also wanted to take a look at how the community sector can be more innovative. As a result, the theme of the 2010 Summit was innovation.

The 2010 *Think Innovation* Summit began with an inspiring Welcome to Country from Elder Bill Nicholson, of the Wurundjeri tribe. Bill gave the audience an insightful account on the history and traditions of his tribe, and was noted in the attendance survey as one of the highlights of the day. The then Premier of Victoria, John Brumby MP, formally opened the Summit, and talked about how Victorian NFP community organisations are becoming more innovative in the work that they do. The then Premier announced the continuation of the OCS until 2014, and told the audience that a priority of the OCS would be the development and implementation of the Victorian Common Funding Agreement, which government departments and agencies will use when working with NFP community organisations.

The first ever Victorian Community Sector Awards were launched by former Minister for Community Development, Lily D'Ambrosio MP. The awards were established to recognise the amazing and innovative achievements of Victoria's NFP community organisations. It was fantastic to see so many organisations apply for the awards, and to see just how innovative the sector is. The winners of the awards, and descriptions of their inspiring innovations, are discussed later in this report.

We were very pleased to have Debra Allcock Tyler, CEO of the UK Directory of Social Change, as the keynote speaker for the day. Debra is a passionate advocate for the NFP sector- or the charity sector as it is known in the UK- and is dedicated to helping the sector grow and thrive. In her keynote address, Debra spoke with admiration for the work of NFP organisations, but was also confrontational at times, challenging attendees to change the way they think about how they operate. Debra was able to speak with many Summit attendees throughout the day, and was impressed by the work being carried out by Victorian NFP community organisations.

Those attending the Summit represented the breadth of Victoria's NFP sector, coming from organisations concerned with the following areas of interest:

- Accommodation/housing
- Aged Care
- Arts
- Children's services
- Chronic Illness
- Community Education
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups
- Disability
- Drug and alcohol
- Employment
- Health / mental health
- Information services
- Legal
- Neighbourhood Houses
- Philanthropy
- Social enterprise
- Sport and recreation
- Volunteering
- Welfare
- Women
- Youth/students

Feedback from the day, as well as ideas for the future, are discussed further along in the report. It was pleasing to note that many people commented positively on the vegetarian food that was served. Having vegetarian food was part of a commitment to making the Summit as environmentally friendly as possible. The venue location was also specifically chosen for its commendable environmental policies, making the Summit a sustainable and environmentally conscious event.

### 3. Current Reality- *the good, the bad and the ugly...*

The working part of the Summit began with attendees invited to reflect and respond to questions relating to their hopes, disappointments and positive moments. Post-it notes around the room recorded the many thoughts of the 300 attendees. The answers to many of the questions painted a picture of a community sector achieving an incredible amount despite sometimes feeling pressured by too few staff and other resources.

Comments posted around the room indicated that the multiple funding agreements the Government has with NFP community organisations is an issue for the sector, as were the differing views some organisations had about their boards. The effect of the Global Financial Crisis was also noted in the responses. Some positives included unexpected funding, improved relationships with philanthropy and successful outcomes for clients of the organisations. A number of responses also pointed to the success of partnerships between NFP community organisations.

#### ***STOP PRESS!***

***The OCS is leading the development of a Common Funding Agreement.***

The questions, along with a selection of answers, are posted below:

#### **1. What did you learn?**

- That I'm a better communicator than I had thought previously
- Learnt to keep optimistic and be hopeful
- We should 'pilot' more rather than 'boots right in'
- Need to use technology to engage disadvantaged learners
- That you can be innovative and you can make the space to be so
- That good leadership makes a difference in a community service organisation

#### **2. What do you wish you had done differently?**

- Learnt to use technology more effectively
- Submitted for more grants
- Staff accomplishments need to be recognised (more)
- Celebrate success more often
- More pro-active less re-active
- Seek other perspectives, explore and learn more

### **3. What happened that you did not expect?**

- Community support for a program
- Unexpected council support
- Retraction of corporate funding
- I expected more resistance to innovative ideas, but was surprised by the commitment
- I didn't expect to develop stronger partnerships with our other partner organisations
- Didn't expect our partnership to work so easily...it was fantastic
- Commitment of state government to back equal pay case

### **4. What made you laugh?**

- My co-workers ability to smile and laugh when working with the most vulnerable people
- Laugh at levels of achievement in community sector with meager resources
- Comments and humour from young people
- My colleagues – you have to laugh when under pressure
- My team who have fun while working extremely hard

### **5. What made you mad?**

- Doing paperwork/compliance
- Pay discrepancies between DHS support workers and community sector/NFP funded rates
- Our board not taking enough action
- Competition between and lack of innovation of community sector because of funding regime, protecting own patch, and risk aversion
- A risk averse management committee
- Jargon, new language and models for funding
- Frequent staff changes due to inadequate salary ranges

### **6. What made you sad?**

- The abuse of children in care
- Losing long term clients
- Silo funding needs to be responsive and connected (across government) so creative strategies can be funded
- Worrying about paying the rent
- That many state school students can't afford basic items like text books, computers and internet for education
- Not staying on track with strategic projects
- The focus on profit above outcomes for clients
- Bureaucratic red tape

- That we are the closest thing that some people have to family

## **7. What was the best thing about the last 12 months?**

- We dealt so well with key staff moving on – we ‘rose to the challenge’!
- Getting to work on a new prevention of violence project with Linfox
- Winning a large funding submission to extend youth services
- Being able to achieve a work life balance by working part-time
- Hearing the incredible stories about the impact of youth mentoring for both young people and volunteer mentors
- Moving to a new premises with the capacity to do so much more including sharing our space with others

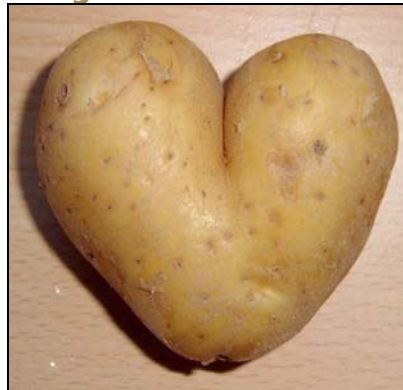
## **8. What were you proud of?**

- Working in the community and drawing out people’s strengths. Connecting and respecting
- Establishment of men’s cooking group
- New partnerships and possibilities
- Seeing the seriousness of philanthropy in creating and helping social change in the community
- Sector collaboration
- Our commitment and drive to make a difference to people’s lives with so few resources
- I am proud of the innovative work that my organisation does
- Proud that our organisation has self-funded three social enterprises without government funding because we were considered too small
- The way youth mentoring orgs share resources and ideas to avoid duplication
- Recognition from government and partners
- What NFPs do for so little funding- how much we achieve

## **9. What were your moments of courage?**

- Rejecting money that wasn’t in line with organisational values and goals
- Introducing a challenging staff appraisal process
- New ambitious strategic plan for organisation
- Victorians’ response to bushfires
- Stepping up to new role in the organisation
- Keeping sight of the bigger picture when implementing change
- Securing ongoing funding for vital services

4. *'In Praise of Odd-Shaped Fruit'*- Keynote address from Debra Allcock-Tyler CEO, Directory of Social Change (UK)



*'...I believe charities are a bit like odd-shaped fruit. We're diverse, irregular, non-conformist...'*

In supermarkets and grocery stores across much of the Western world, shelves are stacked with fruit and vegetables of identical size, weight and colour. However, for every piece of fruit that conforms to our standards and expectations, there is an imperfect piece of fruit going to waste simply because it looks different. Although they may be perfectly edible and as equally delicious, fruit and vegetables that do not conform to our standards are overlooked for public consumption and thus never make it to our dinner tables. Debra told the audience that odd-shaped fruit and vegetables should be celebrated, but that their rejection by consumers shows how sometimes, diversity is not praised like it should be.

Against a slideshow of often hilariously shaped examples of our favourite fruit and vegetables, Debra told the audience that the NFP community sector- or the charity sector as it is known in the UK- is very similar to the fruit and vegetable market. The NFP sector is diverse, but recently some organisations have been looking to fit a certain mould. Debra argued that many NFP community organisations are changing how they operate so that they conform to what they think Government expects from them. NFP community organisations are diverse and irregular like odd-shaped fruit and vegetables, but according to Debra, this is slowly changing.

*'...in competing for contracts to deliver public services, there is still the danger of treating vulnerable people and causes as if they're commodities...'*

Debra told the audience that the UK Government has started to rationalise and organise the community sector, which has effectively distorted the behaviour of NFP organisations. Many organisations began to change the way they operate in the belief that they were acting how the Government

would want them to behave, and would therefore have a greater chance of receiving Government funding.

*'...money is the mechanism, not the motive- and that is what distinguishes us from the private sector...'*

Although these organisations may have succeeded in attracting funding, Debra argued that they began to place far more emphasis on competing with their sector colleagues for government contracts, than working together. According to Debra, this led to the 'commoditisation' of the NFP community sector, arguing that in the last decade, NFP organisations have been used as another way to deliver public services. Debra told the audience that in competing for contracts to deliver community services, and in striving to provide 'value for money', NFPs run the risk of treating vulnerable members of the community as commodities.

Focusing on figures rather than clients meant that some organisations began to imitate the private sector. Debra told the audience that there was no reason to think that the private sector is somehow more efficient and effective than the community sector, pointing to the recent Global Finance Crisis as evidence of this. Suggestions that the sector needs to be open and accountable were rejected by Debra, who told Summit attendees that NFP organisations are constantly being held accountable through legislation, auditing bodies and the scrutiny of funders.

*'...money is the mechanism, not the motive- and that is what distinguishes us from the private sector...'*

Rather than transforming into business-like, competitive organisations, Debra said that the NFP community sector should return to its charitable

core values. Social change and assisting those in need should be the drivers of community organisations, not money. Debra told the audience that the NFP sector needs to stop believing that social change can only be achieved with money, and that a constant reliance on funding and grants has replaced campaigning and activism. Altruism is the source of charitable giving, of volunteerism and of setting up a charity, and is what distinguishes the community sector from businesses. Debra urged those in the audience to remember what they have accomplished with limited funding, and realise that while having access to money may help achieve outcomes, it should not be the main aim of the organisation.

You can read Debra's full speech by visiting the OCS website at:

<http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/communitydevelopment/community-sector/not-for-profit-summit>



## 5. Panel of Victorian Innovators

The Panel of Victorian Innovators comprised representatives from four different NFP community organisations, each of which had introduced a significant change to the way they worked. The organisations on the panel were diverse in size and service delivery area, but were all committed to taking a fresh approach to tackling an existing problem.

The Panel of Victorian Innovators spoke passionately about the innovative changes that have been made to their organisation, and discussed what had prompted these changes. Common to all organisations was the need to look for new ways to overcome existing challenges. While each organisation was unique in the issues they faced, all shared a strong desire to improve existing practices and change the way they operate for the better. The Panel representatives, and their innovation, are listed below:

### ***Volunteer West- Getting young people involved in volunteering***

Attracting young volunteers is a common problem for volunteer organisations, and one that had Cameron Glover searching for ways to overcome this. Cameron, the manager of Volunteer West (a Western suburbs volunteering organisation), wanted to attract young people to volunteering, but faced a number of challenges. Cameron identified there two main obstacles to getting young people into volunteering, and set about transforming how Volunteer West targets this group.

#### *'Selling' Volunteering- a great thing to do*

Firstly, Cameron and his team at Volunteer West looked at how they promoted volunteering. Making volunteering attractive to young people was a crucial part of tapping into the youth market. Volunteer West explored better ways to 'sell' volunteering to young people, and made changes to how they marketed volunteering opportunities.

#### *Going 'techno'- using modern technology to contact potential volunteers*

Although Volunteer West had looked at how to better promote volunteering to young people, they knew a major problem was actually getting people to take the next step and contact Volunteer West. Covering a large area of Melbourne's western suburbs means that many potential volunteers may live far away to where the Volunteer West offices are located. Cameron knew that this meant a lot of young volunteers weren't going to follow up on the opportunities they saw and make an appointment to go to Volunteer West's offices, no matter how interesting the ads sounded.

Volunteer West decided to implement an SMS service, so that young people could text message Volunteer West to say they were interested in volunteering. A Volunteer West team member would then call them back to have a chat about the volunteering opportunities they may be interested in.

This service had a massive impact on the number of young people that contacted Volunteer West. Potential volunteers could register their interest volunteering no matter where they were, without the cost of having to call Volunteer West or make their way into the office. Also, staff members were posted at local government offices in the area in order to attract potential volunteers that were either unable or unlikely to go to Volunteer West's office.

In making it easier for potential volunteers to make that first contact, Volunteer West saw a huge increase in volunteer placements. Cameron told Summit attendees that using technology that was used by young people, such as the SMS service, was crucial in attracting that demographic to volunteering. The changes Volunteer West introduced were inexpensive to implement and maintain, but significantly improved how the organisation attracts and then recruits, young people as volunteers.

### ***Social Firms Australia (SoFA)- The Durable Employment e-Village***

Using new technology was also a way that SoFA addressed a workforce challenge. SoFA's objective is to create accessible employment for people with a mental illness or disability. While much of SoFA's work relates to supporting the direct employment of those with a disability- such as social firms- SoFA also understood the need to support the professional development of mental health and employment practitioners in this area. Having a space where people can share resources and act as a support network was crucial to help the development of the professionals working in the sector. Given the diversity in experience, location and workload of professionals assisting people with a disability or mental illness, an online platform was considered the best way to bring everyone together.

#### *Sharing knowledge- increasing the resources of mental health workers*

Caroline Crosse, Executive Director of SoFA, demonstrated SoFA's Durable Employment e-village at the Summit. The virtual community hosts a range of tools to aid collaboration and the development of shared knowledge, such as blogs, message boards, webinars and resource libraries. The e-village has embraced characteristics of social media, allowing users to search and befriend other users while also sharing information via a number of social media websites. Functions such as a Google-powered search engine, RSS feeds and social media characteristics have created a website that is modern, user-friendly and appealing to tech-savvy workers.

#### *Bringing people together- creating a virtual community*

The e-village has transformed the way mental health practitioners interact with each other, and has created a sense of community for a sector that is geographically diverse and spread across many different professions. In bringing these people together, SoFA is building its capacity to help those with a disability or mental illness find lasting and meaningful employment. SoFA was also one of 22 recipients of Multimedia Victoria's Collaborative Internet Innovation Fund (Round 1), receiving funding for their e-village.

## ***Disability Attendant Support Services Inc (DASSI)- Balancing work, life and everything else***

For DASSI, the challenge lay in attracting and retaining staff. DASSI provides in-home support care, and has to place approximately 1,000 support workers into 4,000 shifts to give in-home care to 750 clients all over Victoria. Looking at how to increase staff retention rates, DASSI developed and implemented a range of flexible working policies which transformed the way DASSI operated.

### *Putting work/life balance theory into practice*

James Thyer, Human Resources Manager of DASSI discussed the features of DASSI's 'Work Life Balance' policy with the audience. Flexible use of leave, job sharing, purchasable leave and flexible working hours are some of the options now available to staff under the scheme. Introducing policies that allowed staff to achieve a more productive and fulfilling balance between their work and personal lives was something that DASSI is very proud of. Staff have more flexibility to balance their personal commitments with their working lives, increasing their job satisfaction and ultimately making DASSI a very competitive employer.

### *Offering more than just a salary*

Not only has the flexible working policy helped retain staff and increase morale, it has also been a big drawcard in attracting newcomers to DASSI. For many applicants, DASSI's commitment to Work / Life balance was a major factor when choosing DASSI as a future employer. Having a flexible working policy allowed DASSI to compete with similar organisations offering higher salaries. Feedback from staff indicated that the policies were immensely popular and easily accessible due to the creation of a Work-Life Balance Guide that explained the options available to staff.

## ***New Leaders Network- Bringing isolated arts organisations together***

Arts organisations are often small in size and sometimes staffed by only one or two workers. This can have quite an isolating effect, and without the guidance of other staff, opportunities for professional development are limited. Adding to this problem is the lack of leadership and support networks in the wider Arts sector.

### *Creating a support structure for Arts staff*

Josh Wright, founder of the New Leaders Network and CEO of AusDance Victoria, experienced first-hand the effect of not having a support network to turn to. Being the Director of a dance organisation with only one or two staff, Josh encountered the challenges of working without the support of other senior staff, common in larger organisations. Josh said that the lack of support options available to him inspired the establishment of the New Leaders

Network.

### *Developing the skills of emerging leaders*

The New Leaders Network is a peer-support learning network that focuses on leadership skills and the professional development of leaders in small arts organisations, just like the ones Josh had worked in. Now, emerging leaders in the Arts sector can seek advice and support from other leaders in the field. The New Leaders Network has allowed Josh to share his experiences with others like him, and the regular meetings give members the chance to discuss challenges as well as engage in training and professional development. Having such a network ensures the Arts sector is led by professional, competent and confident people who have an established network of support with their peers.

### **Small changes can produce big results**

From utilising new technology to showing a new approach to developing leadership skills, the Panel of Innovators demonstrated that innovation in the community sector is flourishing. Importantly, the panel proved that innovation does not necessarily require large sums of money. Being innovative can simply mean thinking of new approaches to tackling issues that have prevented your organisation from moving forward.

## 6. Afternoon Mini-Workshops

Throughout the day, Summit participants were given the opportunity to nominate a particular issue, or area of experience, to be explored in the afternoon workshop sessions.

The workshops from the Summit are listed below:

<b>Ideas to Explore</b>	
<b>1</b>	How should the community sector develop its people...can it be done in a more innovative way?
<b>2</b>	The advantages of adopting an individual funding approach (bottom up) for people with mental illness versus funding service providers (top down)
<b>3</b>	Homelessness and Climate Change – providing better care for people sleeping rough in extreme heat conditions
<b>4</b>	Innovation for innovation's sake
<b>5</b>	How to remove fragmentation and increase political strength in the Disability sector
<b>6</b>	Power of positive thinking
<b>7</b>	Creating an effective complaints process for people with a disability
<b>8</b>	The role of parents in engaging with disengaged young people (their own & others)
<b>9</b>	Building a Federal/State government framework for Social Enterprise
<b>Questions to Explore</b>	
<b>10</b>	How can we decrease the burden of management of compliance & risk avoidance for small community organisations...exploring better governance models
<b>11</b>	We all share common interests - a strong, sustainable, healthy Victoria – are there better ways we can collaborate?
<b>12</b>	How do organisations use new technology innovations?
<b>13</b>	How can the community sector come to fully understand and embrace the benefits of technology
<b>Concepts to share</b>	
<b>14</b>	Getting the best out of your team
<b>A Reason to Get Together</b>	
<b>15</b>	Social Traders would like to hear about your interests in social enterprise and development, including your support needs
<b>16</b>	Finding corporate/community partners and funding to build innovative seniors units (village) in South East region
<b>17</b>	I'm developing a platform to support not-for-profits & enable collaborative projects cross-sector – would love to share ideas about this

18	Developing New Leaders
19	Creating truly supportive workplaces
20	Innovation in Volunteer recruitment

The themes and comments to come out of the workshops included:

- The funding environment is becoming increasingly competitive
- There is an opportunity for a peak body to take on a more active role in the disability sector
- Climate change and homelessness needs to be examined further in the context of emergency planning (heatwaves)
- Technology does not necessarily equate to innovation, sometimes simple changes are the ones that make the biggest difference
- Professional development of staff help leads to greater retention
- There is a need for management to value staff training, and budget for it accordingly
- Getting insurance can be an issue for small community organisations, and without insurance you cannot receive funding
- What becoming an incorporated association means, and what issues are associated with this
- Regional volunteer networks could be established, and could utilise web 2.0 such as wikis, webinars, e-newsletters to keep everybody connected
- Importance of being innovative in a responsible manner- making sure that innovations are tested, and are appropriate for that organisation

The workshops provided the space for Summit attendees to come together and discuss the challenges and possibilities facing the sector. Even more importantly, the workshops allowed attendees to meet new people from different corners of the community sector. Networking opportunities are often lacking in the sector, so the chance to make new contacts and gain a wider understanding of other community organisations was considered invaluable by many attendees.

## 7. The 2010 Victorian Community Sector Awards

The inaugural 2010 Victorian Community Sector Awards were established to recognise the outstanding achievements of Victoria's NFP community organisations. The awards align with the fifth category of the *Victorian Government's Strengthening Community Organisations Action Plan* (the Action Plan): 'recognising organisations and co-ordinating across government', and the four categories of the Awards relate to the first four themes of the Action Plan. In keeping with the theme of the summit, the awards focused on innovation in the community sector. The awards aimed to highlight the new approaches Victorian community organisations have taken to tackle problems old and new, and to improve the way they operate. The award categories were:

- **Category 1: New approaches to managing administrative / compliance tasks**  
This category recognises organisations that have shown innovation in their operational practices and reduced unnecessary burden.
- **Category 2: New approaches to workforce challenges**  
This category recognises organisations within the sector that have responded to workforce challenges in an innovative way, thereby enhancing their organisational capacity.
- **Category 3: New approaches to partnerships with philanthropy and business**  
This category recognises organisations that have shown innovation in attracting funding from, and engaging in, partnerships with business or the philanthropy sector.
- **Category 4: Engagement with the local community**  
This Award will recognise organisations that have shown innovation in engaging with their local community, beyond the breadth of their service delivery requirements.

In total, 34 award entries were received across the four categories from Victorian NFP community organisations. The organisations ranged in size, service delivery area and location. A total of 12 organisations were shortlisted (3 entries per category) for consideration by the awards selection panel. The selection panel was convened by the OCS, and included representatives from the following organisations:

- ACE Vic
- Volunteering Victoria
- WIRE Women's Services
- Department of Human Services

The award entries were judged on how the new approach / innovation had improved how the organisation operates, as well as how easily it could be adapted and replicated elsewhere in the community sector.

The awards were presented by the then Minister for Community Development, Lily D'Ambrosio.

Winning organisations received \$2,000 to support their innovation, while runners-up in each category were awarded prizes of \$500.

A short video documenting their innovation was also prepared for each of the shortlisted entrants, and played on the day. These videos are available on the OCS website, and were given to shortlisted entrants to use for their own promotional purposes.

The standard of the award entries was high, and choosing the winners in each category was a tough task for the selection panel, which was very impressed with the quality of the entries. The winners and runners-up in each category, and a description of their innovation is below:

**Category 1:** *New approaches to managing administrative / compliance tasks*

**WINNER:** Inner East Community Health Service & Melbourne City Mission  
*-Results Based Accountability Framework*

The framework has allowed IECHS and Melbourne City Mission to change the way they measure performance, focusing on outcomes rather than outputs. Now, they are able to see if consumers are actually better off as a result of their programs and interventions. The RBA Framework allows organisations to identify its program and service level accountability of its population or consumer group, and then map how this contributes to a broader population result. In measuring performance against a number of key measures relating to how the program affects clients, rather than how many clients are serviced by the program, staff can reflect on program design and better gauge its effectiveness. Using the RBA Framework, IECHS and Melbourne City Mission have been able to budget more effectively, and can more accurately judge the success of their total program through using a consistent framework to measure client outcomes, across the whole organisation.

**RUNNER-UP:** Disability Knowledge Network  
*-An online network of community service providers*

The Disability Knowledge Network (DK Net) is a collaborative approach between a group of community service providers across Victoria through the establishment of a knowledge network. The knowledge network allows for an internet-based system sharing of expertise and documents among members.

In addition to sharing quality, compliance and continuous improvement documents, the knowledge network allows users to access resources that are applicable to all organisations, such as staff inductions and information for volunteers. As the network is web-based, resources can be based in any media format. The network has reduced administrative costs for each member organisation, as the burden to implement, update maintain the network is shared. IT infrastructure has improved for member organisations, as has the IT literacy of staff.

**RUNNER-UP:** Ausdance Vic Inc

*-Victoria's dance sector only a click away with an online dance directory*

The Victorian Dance Directory is an online searchable database to connect and promote the Victorian dance sector and its services. One of the main functions of the directory is to connect people interested in dancing (professionally, socially or recreationally) with local dance classes.

The development of the dance directory has dramatically alleviated the Ausdance administrative burden by reducing the number of queries directed to the office. Moreover, as a peak body for the dance sector, referring enquiries to a database ensures that Ausdance is transparent and empowers users to make informed decisions by conducting their own research. In addition to reducing administrative burden, the dance directory can also be used as a research tool to map where the majority of dance services are located, and look into the areas where there are gaps.

**Category 2:** *New approaches to workforce challenges*

**WINNER:** Inner East Community Health Service

*-Collaboration with Postgraduate students*

Inner East Community Health Service (IECHS) offer programs in specific health areas to address the needs of an ageing population. The demand for Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist-led group exercise programs at IECHS exceeded its staffing and financial resources. In order to keep the program running, IECHS collaborated with Victoria University to take on their Postgraduate Rehabilitation students as part of their compulsory 800 clinical hours experience, as a solution to their workforce shortage and stretched financial capacity. A review of the program also indicated that clients wanted to maintain their wellbeing through the use of community based facilities, rather than relying on health services.

Victoria University students were able to act as mentors to clients, and conduct half the program in the IECHS led exercise group, and half in a local YMCA, easing the transition phase of clients. Collaborating with Victoria University meant that IECHS was able to continue offering a popular program to their clients, despite the workforce shortages they were experiencing. They were also able to transform the project into one that transitioned clients into the community exercise environment under the guidance of trained health professionals. The success of the program

has allowed IECHS to expand its services, and pilot new programs targeted to client needs, through the continuous collaboration with Victoria University students.

**RUNNER-UP:** Sandybeach Centre

*-Breaking down silos with internet technology*

Sandybeach Centre developed a Special Projects Group (SPG), focused on addressing workplace challenges. The SPG is facilitated by the innovative use of ICT, using Microsoft SharePoint to develop an intranet site that allows for online discussions, access to a document library and version control for current documents. Having discussions online has meant that the group is not affected by different working hours among members, allowing both part-time and full-time staff to contribute equally.

The SPG has fostered leadership within the organisation, and has brought together individuals from different sections of the organisation, preventing 'silo' thinking. Also, SPG members have increased their ICT literacy through participation in the group, and have encouraged their own teams to use discussion forums, team calendars and document libraries and be more innovative in the way they conduct their day-to-day business.

**RUNNER-UP:** GippSport

*-Developing a capable and appropriate workforce*

One of the workforce challenges GippSport faced was having out-of-date position descriptions that didn't accurately reflect the skills needed to work at GippSport. GippSport has utilised the Office for the Community Sector's Workforce Capability Framework to re-develop position descriptions and build key selection criteria that allow applicants to clearly understand what is required of them.

GippSport used the Framework to revise position descriptions for the Executive Officer, Program Managers and Coordinators and Administrative Officers. GippSport will use the Framework for future staff appraisals, which will assist with future development opportunities for staff. Prior to using the Framework, GippSport did not have comprehensive documentation of the qualities and capabilities expected of people working for the organisation. Now, position descriptions accurately reflect the characteristics and qualities GippSport is based on, helping to ensure that it offers a more effective service to clients and key stakeholders.

**Category 3:** *New approaches to partnerships with philanthropy and business*

**WINNER:** Eastern Disability Access Resource

*-Reversing the mentoring paradigm*

Eastern Disability Access Resource (EDAR) partnered with Monash University in a collaborative program where young adults with a disability

from EDAR act as mentors to Monash medical students. The aim of the partnership between EDAR and Monash University is twofold; it aims to build the confidence and competence of Monash University medical students in communicating clearly and effectively with people who have communication difficulties, as well as assisting EDAR clients in public speaking and giving feedback to health professionals about their communication.

Many of the medical students participating in the program previously had little or no contact with people with a disability, and EDAR clients- acting as tutors- are valued for their contribution to medical student training. The partnership is unique in the sense that people with a disability –usually recipients of service- are now providers of service.

**RUNNER-UP: Women's Health Victoria**  
*-Preventing violence against women*

Women's Health Victoria developed a *Working Together Against Violence* project which targets the workplace as a key setting for the prevention of violence against women. Much of the work in this area has focused on working with women who have experienced violence, or working with men as perpetrators. In order to promote their project, Women's Health Victoria partnered with Linfox- a male dominated logistics company- to promote their project in the workplace.

Partnering with Linfox, and promoting the project in the workplace, Women's Health Victoria was able to adopt a more preventative approach with this project. Women's Health Victoria chose to partner with a male-dominated company and focus its efforts on the workplace as it recognised that organisations and organisational culture have a powerful role in influencing the behaviour of individuals or groups. Women's Health Victoria understood the unique role of men in assisting with preventing violence; by helping to change attitudes and behaviours in the community, men can contribute to the success of the program.

**RUNNER-UP: Gateway Community Health**  
*-Emergency food services as a starting point for strengthening the community*

The Albury Wodonga Regional Food Security Network comprised Gateway Community Health and representatives from local welfare agencies, food relief providers and local government. The network commissioned a feasibility study to investigate the potential for a model that could address the range of issues associated with food insecurity. Food insecurity refers to the inability of some sections of society to access a safe, affordable and nutritious food supply. The Albury Wodonga Regional Food Share project is a response to the growing incidence of food insecurity in Wodonga and surrounding districts and the significant impact it has on individuals, families and communities.

The Food Share concept is multi-dimensional. Rather than focusing on food rescue/emergency relief alone, it is based on a community strengthening model, drawing together a range of activities that are focused on community development, skill building and social inclusion. As well as offering food rescue/recovery activities and emergency food relief, the program also offers training and transitional work placement programs. The collaboration between Gateway Community Health and other food security related organisations in the region has allowed for a coordinated approach to addressing food insecurity, increasing the ability of organisations to address the issue effectively and holistically.

**Category 4:**     *Engagement with the local community*

**WINNER:** SecondBite

*-Connecting community food programs with retail stores in outer suburban and regional areas*

SecondBite's 'Community Connect' program partners a local community food program, with a local retail store to enable food to be collected and then distributed to people in need. The program brings willing partners together to mitigate food waste in the food production and retail sector and at the same time improve food access to vulnerable members of the local community.

SecondBite operates in the inner suburbs of Melbourne and Hobart, and despite their success in these areas, a key challenge was how to best reach the outer suburban and regional areas. 'Community Connect' allows SecondBite to address the issue of food insecurity in any part of the country, by creating partnerships between food donors and relief agencies. The program has allowed SecondBite to provide access to good quality surplus fresh food to people in need more efficiently and economically, no matter their location.

**RUNNER-UP:** Footscray Community Arts Centre

*-Tackling racism and discrimination through the arts*

'Fear of a Brown Planet remixed by FCAC' is a project encompassing comedy, hip-hop and social media to look at community engagement and modern race relations. Footscray Community Arts Centre collaborated with comedians Aamer Rahman and Nazeem Hussain to develop the project that is informed by research and community engagement regarding racial discrimination with a specific focus on Melbourne's West.

The project included a dedicated campaign of web 2.0 technologies to garner interest and participation in the project, including a specific Vimeo channel featuring webisodes, facebook, twitter, SMS and other social networking tools. As well as the social media element, the project included a series of workshops as a part of the Hip Hop Academy, attracting high levels of attendees aged 8-28. The web 2.0 activities allowed culturally

and linguistically diverse members of the community to have a voice in the issue of race relations and community engagement.

**RUNNER-UP:** Mission Australia- Charcoal Lane  
*-Collaborating to build skills in the Koori community*

In order to engage with the local community and offer educational opportunities, Mission Australia established the Charcoal Lane restaurant in Melbourne. In using a restaurant to promote Koori culture and history, Mission Australia has adopted a new way to engage the local community and embrace cultural diversity. In addition to promoting Koori culture, Charcoal Lane provides local trainees with hospitality training.

Engaging with the local community in an effective way has opened up a number of opportunities for Mission Australia, from Government, the corporate sector as well as the Koori community. Restaurant trainees have been offered traineeships with large hospitality organisations and Koori organisations have been able to offer referrals. The local community has benefited from learning more about Koori culture and history.

## 8. Feedback and ideas for the future

*“The highlight of the day for me was to learn from the innovative thinkers of their experiences. For me I see this as a motivation for me to be someone who can make a difference in my community or organisation if I can commit and dedicate myself to make a change for the better. I believe this kind of workshop is an excellent one to give opportunities to innovators and participants to learn from each other.”*

The 2010 *Think Innovation* Summit was well received by Summit attendees. Post-Summit feedback conducted by the OCS indicated that overall, participants found the day useful and informative. The keynote address by Debra Allcock-Tyler was identified as a clear highlight of the day, and the opportunity to network with sector colleagues was also positively noted. The early start time was identified by some as a barrier to greater attendance.

### What People Thought:

#### What did people think was the highlight?

- *Debra's talk really stimulated discussion.*
- *The Guest speaker - and the contacts I made.*
- *Opportunity to see what other innovative practices are currently underway within other sectors- some great ideas!*
- *Debra Allcock Tyler was a very engaging speaker.*
- *The content was fantastic and I was impressed with the comment regarding the vegetarian lunch option and sustainability.*
- *Debra Allcock Tyler and lunch*
- *The opportunity to network worked really well at lunch.*
- *Debra's talk - it really reaffirms what the social sector is about and give everyone a good reminder.*
- *Reading the post it notes about what we are proud of etc.*
- *The speech by Debra was excellent. I also enjoyed the vegetarian fare.*
- *Keynote speaker and networking opportunity*
- *I valued the freshness of Debra Allcock Taylor's input and the opportunity to identify and discuss sector wide issues.*
- *Debra Alcock Tyler was inspiring, relevant and expert. She was able to represent the views of the sector esp those from the smaller NFP sector, which is rarely done. Absolutely brilliant and I wish she could come again.*
- *The recognition given to innovation in the NFP sector*
- *Having the chance to think outside the circle and hearing about our indigenous history*

#### What people didn't like:

- *The starting time was inconsiderate of regional travellers - I had to get up at 4.30am! The workshops in afternoon lacked direction*
- *A more structured presentation style day. The mini workshops were very dependent on the quality of the person running the session- a good idea, but also an opportunity for the person running the session to push their*

*own agenda!*

- *Although I appreciated the afternoon workshop, perhaps you could ask people to consider a contribution earlier, i.e. when registering?*
- *the panel session didn't give a lot of 'take aways' if you have been to other sector based events*
- *The workshops and panel discussions. More direction in the workshops and the panel could include government reps who could answer questions*
- *The opportunity to suggest and speak to new and/or innovative proposals. It is suggested a time of 30 minutes group interchange and 3 minutes for a speaker to address key points of proposal*
- *The projects were all so good, let's receive more information. Maybe a speaker who will direct us even further into the realms of the possible when it comes to innovation*
- *More from the workshops - not enough time and what becomes of the thinking? How does it turn into action?*
- *The workshops although were interesting, I found it difficult to hear each other. Perhaps having the break out session around a table would have been better rather than standing and trying to listen to everyone's comments/feedback/views over everyone else's heads.*

#### **Where to next time?**

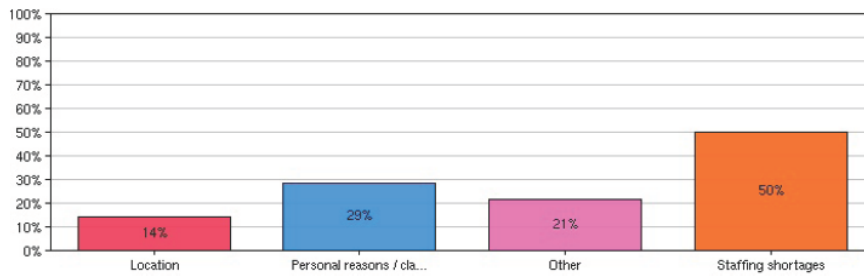
- *Perhaps ask participants for suggested topics/issues prior to the summit and structure them appropriately*
- *Great summit - love the concept and the capacity to network and meet people with similar goals*
- *The day was too long. Notice how people left after lunch? Maybe a short sharp streamlined award presentation from 9 to 12.30 & then lunch together?*
- *It was great to get people to put forward questions for discussion but this could be done prior to the summit so that we have more time to think about our question or to choose which topic we can contribute to*
- *Later start & restructure of the summit format to ensure participants hang around for the presentations, more focus & time for sharing "winning" innovations with others*
- *The event was a fantastic idea. The presentations of the shortlisted projects were really interesting and encouraging. Debra was really good choice as the keynote speaker. Her frankness and sharing of her experiences was just fabulous. Need more people like her to bring about changes in the way we think and do things*

#### **What the OCS Learned:**

Based on the feedback received, the OCS will look at incorporating structured 'skills-based' workshops into the next Summit agenda, followed by a more informal networking event. This format would allow participants to attend workshops based on their desire to obtain skills / knowledge in a particular area, while being able to enjoy networking opportunities following the structured part of the day.

Results from the feedback survey is below:

If you had registered, but did not attend the 2010 Think Innovation Summit, please indicate why:



Value	Count	Percent %
Location	2	14.3%
Personal reasons / clash with another event	4	28.6%
Other	3	21.4%
Staffing shortages	7	50%

Statistics	
Total Responses	14

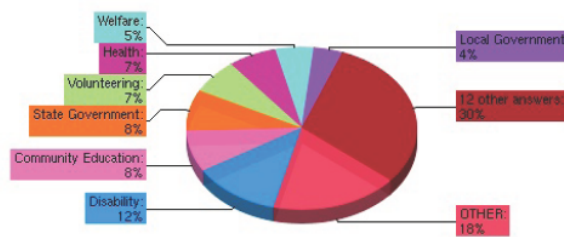
Where do you live?



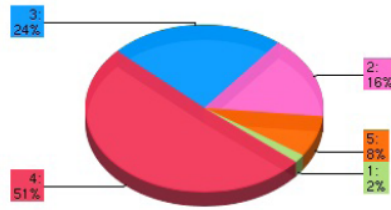
Value	Count	Percent %
Metro Melbourne	60	82.2%
Regional Victoria	12	16.4%
Interstate	1	1.4%

Statistics	
Total Responses	73

In which area do you work?



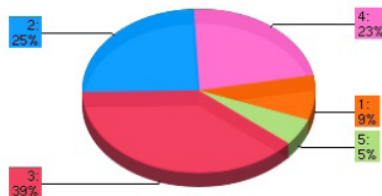
Overall, how would you rate the 2010 Think Innovation Summit (1 being poor, 5 being excellent)?



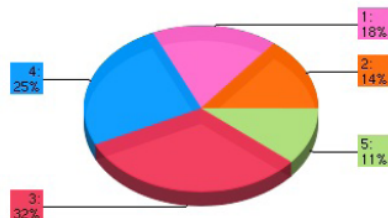
How would you rate the keynote speaker Debra Allcock Tyler from the UK Directory of Social Change (1 being poor, 5 being excellent)?



How would you rate the afternoon mini workshops (1 being poor, 5 being excellent)?



How would you rate the Panel of Victorian Community Sector Innovators? (1 being poor, 5 being excellent)?



How appropriate was the venue and location (1 being poor, 5 being excellent)?

