

Connecting people

communitybuilders.nsw website

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communitybuilders.nsw objectives

- Offer opportunities for different government departments and community groups to come together as users and contributors.
- Feature material which is of use for economic development, community capacity building and environmental protection.
- Create links between material which stimulates users to think beyond their immediate need for information and encourages them to make connections between their work and the work of other people involved in community building.

Features of communitybuilders

Site components:

- what's new
- Events
- discussion forum
- share your story
- featured organisations
- Feedback
- email lists
- monthly newswire – close to 4,000 subscribers
- daily forum bulletin – close to 2,000 subscribers
- staff identify and research current topics of interest
- 30 - 40 new articles added each month
- users submit content using online forms
- forum provides dynamic content; identifies topics for content

Users and usage

- community leaders, community and government workers, volunteers, program managers, policy makers, academics, students, youth and seniors
- government (30%), Non-Government sector (26%), Community members (13%), Education (9%), Students (9%) and Business (5%), other (7%)
- 75.48% are from NSW, 24.52% are from all other States and Territories. 8.51% of subscribers are from Queensland and 7.97% from Victoria
- 56.13% are from Metropolitan Sydney, 43.83% from Regional NSW, and 3.14% from ACT
- 10 million hits in 2003 a 33% increase on 2002
- 1.5 million page requests in 2003
- the discussion forum is the most frequently used part of the site, followed by funding information



Governing from the Verandah

The communitybuilders.nsw
discussion forum as platform
for social government

‘The space of government has always been contested. Which actors, we ask, can legitimately and effectively address the problems that afflict our communities and our society. In 1999 a new platform upon which this contest could be played out was created: a web-based discussion forum called communitybuilders.nsw. It is my view that communitybuilders.nsw forum users stand on what might be termed the verandah of the edifice of government: external yet linked to the core structure of the state.’

Richard Joseph Stella

Steven Clift is editor of Democracies Online and a Member, Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) E-Government Project Advisory Group. In a paper ***public net-work: Online Information Exchange in the Pursuit of Public Service Goals***,(2003) makes several references to communitybuilders.nsw which include:

'This initiative is likely the world's most comprehensive government-hosted public net-work project tied closely to direct policy implementation. Along with a portal to quality information resources, they have developed a thriving hybrid web forum/e-mail list with over 1000 participants.' (now close to 2,000) ... His research shows that at the moment, publicly accessible ***Public net-work*** projects are rare.

E-Public Work/Public net-work

Public net-work

- This new concept represents the strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to better implement established public policy goals and programs through direct and diverse stakeholder online involvement.
- Governments hosting **public net-work** initiatives are shifting from their role as “sole providers” of public services to facilitators of those working to solve similar public problems. In our case this is strengthening the capacity of communities.

E-Public Work/Public net-work? Cont.

- moves beyond “one-way” information and service delivery toward “two-way” and “many-to-many” exchange of information, knowledge, and experience
- designed to facilitate the online exchange of information, knowledge and/or experience among those doing similar public work
- hosted or funded by government agencies
- while they are generally open to the public, they are focused on specific issues that attract niche stakeholder involvement
 - designed to help governments more effectively pursue their established missions in a collaborative and sustainable manner.
 - developing the “neutral host” facilitation role, along with sustained funding, is important

Examples of forum participation

1. Author: [michael.mcnish](mailto:michael.mcnish@melbpc.org.au) (---.melbpc.org.au)
Date: 05-10-04 22:04

Hi,

I want to form a company to sell our product online with ALL proceeds going to charity.

Would this make us a Non Profit Organisation or some kind of fund raising charity fund thingie? And how would I go about setting this up? (i have the ATO links thanks, but i'm just not sure how to reference our company)


2. Hello all

I am working with workers who work with families and children on the Central Coast through a Networks of Practice project funded by Families First. My role is to facilitate and support the networks.

One of our networks is keen to develop some "Principles of funding" as a basis for ensuring adequate resourcing of organisations and minimum standards of funding. This has arisen in part through a mapping survey which has documented the low levels of funded staff in ratio to volunteers, in organisations which at times are undertaking complex family work. However, broader concern has been present for many years about inadequacy of funding levels in many programs, and the need for equity in funding.

An idea (objective) is that we may be able to adopt a regional approach to funding issues, both in identification of gaps, as well as linking with government service providers as well. In this way, it is hoped that the service infrastructure will be stronger and better able to support workers in their roles, which in turn will increase the chances of best practice service delivery being achieved. Moreover, it is hoped in the longer term that there will be a less competitive approach to available funding, more likelihood of partnerships developing, and ultimately, that we will have some of the gaps in service provision filled. We are of course positive about our prospects of making a difference!

So I would love to hear from anyone who has undertaken anything similar before, or has some ideas about it. We are not after funding body specific principles, rather something broader that could be applied in some way as minimum standards to be considered/ negotiated about.



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to strengthen communities

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Good morning Carolyn

Just a quick message to thank you for the definition you posted on Community Builders for Hussain. Of all the explanations of community building I have seen, I thought the Xavier de Souza Briggs posting encapsulated it best. After emailing it to my community network list here in Normanton and it received many healthy responses.


For your interest Normanton is located 700km west of Cairns in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland, the town has a population of 1,500 people of which 62% are Indigenous and form four traditional Aboriginal tribal groups, Kukatja, Gkuthaarn, Kurtijar and Takalaka. The only other town in the Shire which is larger than Tasmania - is Karumba 70km away on the coast. This is one of the most isolated communities in Australia.

Whilst the intellectual/academic dialogue on policy developments is not particularly relevant to this part of the world, I can tell you that Community Builders is regularly quoted as a best practice model locating community development information and is often discussed at meetings as a likely source of information regarding community project and capacity building.

In sum, Community Builders is having a positive effect and assisting in the development of this small isolated community.

Thanks for your efforts.

Aaron Fuller
Community Development Officer
Carpentaria Shire Council




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Like you Aaron, I work as a CDO in a rural Shire in Central Queensland. Perry Shire is very small, we have only 440 residents. We are west of Bundaberg about 1hr 20mins by car from the coast. We have no banks here, a Gen Store, P Office, Fuel and Rural Supplies Outlet, A caravan Park, Hotel/Motel, Health Centre, Police Station ,a Primary School and the Shire Office.

A colleague in my network put me on to Community Builders NSW and what a wonderful resource it has been for me. Now I look forward to each email from CB my invisible support network...your site is one of the best that I've found!.




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I value the emails people submit. It is a fantastic way to obtain practical and theoretical thought and ideas. There is no other email network that lights up my screen with activities and points of views from other areas that I can apply in my own region or that make me think beyond my own boundaries.

Happy to become more active as time goes on. I am relatively new to the role and settling in at the moment. I am in the middle of studying a Masters in Public Policy at ANU and have worked in Federal Government in Capacity Building, and I must say that the intellect and application by people out there in the regions goes way beyond any Uni theories or government policies. They are behind what is happening out there.'



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*Start with what they know,
Build with what they have.*

*. . . But with the best leaders
When the work is done
the task is accomplished
The people will say,
'We have done this ourselves.'
Lao Tzu, China 700 BC*