

the CSR Citizen

August 2005



"Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is when a company achieves sustainable development not only in the economical dimension, but also in the social and environmental dimensions"



Featuring this month....

- [CSR Working Group Really Working!](#)
- [International Credit Union Day](#)
- [Companion Credit Union and Employee Volunteering](#)
- [Extracts from the Toolkit...](#)

CSR Working Group Really Working!

A CSR Working Group (WG) has been formed to contribute industry knowledge to the development of the CSR Toolkit.

The WG have now met three times and will continue to meet regularly to assess the content of the Toolkit in terms of relevance to credit unions.

Members of the WG are:

- Patricia Langham: *Tafe & Community CU*
- David Loring: *NSW Teachers CU*
- Clinton Blanks: *Bankstown City CU*
- John Paine: *Family First CU*
- Graeme Grundy: *Reliance CU*
- Josh Moyes: *Public Affairs CUSCAL Industry Association*

The WG has been providing excellent feedback as to the Toolkit contents. If you are interested in seeing what has been covered at WG meetings to date, please have a look at the [CSR section of the CUFA website](#).

International Credit Union Day

International Credit Union Day is to be held on Thursday 20 October. Credit unions should consider the week of 17 to 21 October as an opportunity to celebrate special events, **community grants** and **other community activities**. If you would like assistance in planning or coordinating local or regional promotions, please contact Peter Hansen, CUSCAL's PR & Media Manager, on (02) 8299 9024 or phansen@cuscal.com.au

Did you know...Over **4.4 million Australians** are **volunteers**, this works out to be more than 30% of the adult population. (source: *Volunteering Australia*)

Companion Credit Union and Employee Volunteering

"Corporate or employee volunteering is a commitment by a commercial organisation to encourage staff to volunteer in the not-for-profit sector. It ranges from individual volunteer efforts, to team or extensive organisational involvement" (Volunteering Australia).

Companion CU strongly supports employee volunteering. The credit union has formed a network group of employees who have attended CUFA's Development Education (DE) workshop. This network functions to support staff members who have completed the DE workshop and are engaging in a self-directed project applying their DE knowledge. Companion CU gives staff time off during the day for the DE network to meet, and to engage in their DE project.

One of Companion's Branch Managers, Maree Henry, is currently working on an exciting project with the support of the DE network.

Maree's project involves working with the Palais Royale, a Newcastle youth centre venue, which assists the local youth between the ages of 12 to 24 to develop their life skills and help them find employment. A number of the young people live in youth hostels.

The Palais is about to launch an internet radio station and Maree is volunteering her skills to help with the launch. The launch will be a big event held at Newcastle's Civic Park, with local bands, hip hop acts, break-dancers and aerosol



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art displays. The whole event will be broadcast live over the Palais's new internet radio station.

Maree said "This is a great opportunity for Companion to become a part of a community project that benefits the local youth. It proves Companion's commitment by demonstrating how much they care for the community."

Employee volunteering is one of the fastest growing forms of corporate community investment, and is also becoming a significant part of many community business partnerships. Since Maree started volunteering at the Palais, two more of Companion's people, Ray O'Brien (Companion's Chief Executive Officer) and Peta Rafty, have become involved in the project. What began as an individual's volunteering effort is evolving into extensive organisational involvement. As Maree said, "Who knows what lies ahead for Companion and the Palais".



Extracts from the Toolkit...

To whet your appetite for the CSR Toolkit, we are featuring an extract from the Toolkit in this month's newsletter. We have selected the 'Business Case' and 'What Your Credit Union Can Do' sections for the Employee Volunteering category, to continue the theme from the case study above.

Business Case for Employee Volunteering

The business sector has acknowledged that to remain successful and sustainable, they need to operate in healthy stable communities. In recent years volunteerism has been used by businesses as a means to improve the stability and health of the community.

Corporate volunteerism is a highly visible element of any businesses community investment program and one of the most effective forms of corporate social responsibility.¹ Volunteering Australia cites the multiple benefits of volunteering, enhancing the success of the business, the happiness of employees and health of the community.²

Business benefits

- Increased company pride and loyalty by staff

¹ Volunteering Australia, 'Corporate shares community profits: A guide to engaging your employees' pg. 1

² Volunteering Australia 'Corporate shares community profits: A guide to engaging your employees' pg. 2 – 4

- Better employee attendance, recruitment and retention
- Improved staff morale, motivation, team spirit and initiative
- New skill development opportunities for staff
- More positive corporate image and reputation
- Heightened and positive recognition by customers and consumers
- New business opportunities
- Improved stakeholder relations

Employee benefits

- Personal satisfaction and fulfillment
- Enhances knowledge and skills
- Team-building exercise
- Leadership development
- Networking opportunities

Community benefits

- Transferring skills, knowledge and technical expertise into the community
- Providing access to teams of volunteers for major tasks
- Improving understanding and new sources of energy and perspectives
- Providing access to free or subsidised resources
- Increasing public awareness of community issues
- Changing company behaviours and practices that create social, economic or environmental problems

What Your Credit Union Can Do

This section features a number of ideas on what your credit union can do if it is interested in employee volunteering as a corporate social responsibility activity.

- Evaluate which not-for-profit organisations' causes and charity events that are important to your local community, employees and credit union, and organise a volunteer program
- Develop a formal employee volunteering policy, listing the number of days paid and unpaid for employee volunteering and coordinate the administration duties
- Commonly businesses provide 1-2 days of paid volunteer days, per employee per year.
- Some credit unions allow up to 5 days for employees to take part in the CUFA DE program and also allow employee volunteer days for the mentoring program
- Arrange flexible informal working arrangements to support volunteer commitments
- Establish Community Volunteering awards for employee participation.

Would you like to contribute a Case Study to CUFA for the next CSR newsletter, and for the CSR Toolkit?

You don't need to write it up yourself – either post a few lines on the CSR discussion forum on interact, or drop Sonali a brief email (sbishop@cuscal.com.au) or call her on (02) 8299 9031. Sonali will be in contact and write up the case study for you. It's easy – just ask Maree Henry!



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