

# BUSTER BULLETIN

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### Victorian Consultant!

We are proud to announce that we now have a Consultant contracting to us in Victoria. We currently have clients all over Australia and we were approached by Mark Ryan offering to provide services to us and our Victorian clients. Mark recently starting taking on a number of our tender and grant related clients and his significant experience in a variety of fields has aligned perfectly with his responsibilities to our clients. As a former legal practitioner with twenty-seven years experience (including fourteen as a firm principal) Mark has a unique insight into representing clients in battles with bureaucracy and over the past 5 years after completing a Diploma of Professional Writing, has been a private consultant writing personal and business documents.

In this environ Mark has been responsible for creating a variety of different documents aimed at supporting businesses and non profit organisations. These include preparing expressions of interest, tenders, company policies and procedures (including OH&S), general correspondence, a family history booklet, organisational rules and various workplace documents including enterprise agreements.

Mark is meticulous and strives for perfection in document preparation. Mark's writing skills have been honed through preparing many employment applications for happy clients including résumés, selection criteria responses and cover letters for a wide range of occupations including school and university graduates, trades-people, accountants, lawyers, public servants, teachers, PhD candidates, receptionists, physiotherapists, police officers and PA's.

We encourage any Victorian businesses, non profit organisations, schools, sporting clubs etc to contact us for any assistance with tenders, grant opportunities, organisational development, project planning etc. Our impressive successes and Mark's skills and expertise ensures that we can help all clients in the Victorian market in a personal way. Mark will be extremely beneficial in managing the needs of Victorian clients.

So if you are a Victorian based business, school, sport and recreation organisation, community organisation or some other not for profit entity we can assist you!

#### Specialists in:

- *Government and Philanthropic Funding*
- *Tender Writing Services*
- *Government & Private Sector Liaison*
- *Town Planning and Land Resumption Advice*
- *Business & Strategic Planning*
- *Job Application Writing Services*
- *Business Support Services*
- *Sponsorship Proposal and Event Management*

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## Another School Success

We have just received advice of another success with one of our school based clients. Through the 2011 NAB Schools First Awards we have won \$50,000 in funding for Everton Park State High School for their Alternative Curriculum Education program in partnership with the Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service and Salvation Army Church. The school and the Salvation Army have been providing an alternative education program for students in Years 10 to 12 who have disengaged from mainstream education. These students feel disconnected from society and often need support to overcome social and emotional barriers. The Youth Outreach Service works with the school to develop and deliver a program that re-engages young people with education or offers an alternative. ACE is located at one of the Salvation Army sites and the students are given the opportunity to complete their Year 10 and Senior Certificates in a flexible setting that also offers life skills and personal development workshops. Teachers from the school and the Education Support Worker collaborate to provide meaningful courses and activities to support these students. There are significant benefits to others in the community as the benefits to the students flow onto those around them.

The judges of the Awards had this to say about the program – “A wonderful partnership that has the school and its partner determined to improve the lives of disenfranchised young people by giving them an education they could easily miss out on.” A huge congratulations to Everton Park State High for such a wonderful project concept something which we are very thankful that the school had faith in our abilities to assist them. Our Consultant Amy Rosanowski who has found a real niche in assisting schools did a wonderful job in preparing the submission. Amy basically took the “raw information” that the school provided about the program and then prepared the submission to demonstrate clear evidence against the criteria and making clear linkages with the School First program focus. Well done Everton Park State High School and a special thanks again to Amy – top job! If you are involved with a school which badly needs funding maybe you should consider having a chat with us. We now work for many schools across Australia and would love to assist your school!

## Conservation Success

We have another success to crow about – this time in the conservation field. We have received advice of a great success following us recently preparing a tender for Aust Care Environmental Solutions, a Brisbane based company providing excellence in vegetation and landscaping solutions. This tender related to being selected to be on a panel of preferred suppliers tasked with re-vegetating koala habitat areas for the Department of Environment and Resource Management. Aust Care had previously been unsuccessful with tenders for this work. Our assistance and expertise obviously tipped the scales with Aust Care now being one of a select group who are offered this very lucrative work through DERM. Harry and the team at Aust Care run a very professional business proving environmental support services across South East Qld. We are very thankful for the opportunity to work on this very complex and comprehensive tender.

It doesn't matter what grant or tender, businesses or non-profits are seeking or what industry sector they come from the simple fact is that we achieve results given our past experience in the Government sector and now in assisting clients in these fields. Contact us to see how we can help you.

# Importance of Acquitting Funding

## Why must you acquit your grant?

Having completed your funded project, almost all funding bodies will require you to acquit your funding. Essentially in short acquitting funding means that you need to prove to the funding body that the money allocated to your organisation was spent in line with what you stated in your funding/grant application and in line with the requirements of the funding program.

## Acquitting funding is important for a number of reasons:-

- provide the funding body with important information to advocate for continued funding of the program;
- account for your use of public funds and demonstrate that the funding has been used for the purpose for which it was provided, and in accordance, with your Funding Agreement;
- assist Government or Philanthropic agencies in assessing how successful funding programs are in meeting the needs of the community; and
- sometimes provides organisations with the opportunity to make suggestions regarding improvements to the funding program.

## When should you acquit your grant?

Generally we suggest you acquit your funding by preparing a report to the funding body. Sometimes funding bodies require organisations to complete a specified form or request a report in a certain format. You should acquit the funding as soon as the funding has been fully expended and the project is completed. If organisations have any difficulty in providing proof of acquittal this MUST be raised with the funding body as soon as this becomes apparent.

## What happens if you do not acquit?

Failure to satisfactorily acquit funding will make you ineligible for future funding from that program and in fact will seriously jeopardise your ability to access other funding.

## What information should you provide?

In acquitting your funding you need to validate the appropriate expenditure of every cent of funding provided. As such you need to provide proof of the expenditure – this is normally done by proving copies of invoices/receipts for goods and services. Further providing copies of bank account statements can also verify the deposit of the initial funding and then the withdrawal of various amounts as the project progresses. It is a good idea to set up a separate bank account for funding so that you can clearly see when monies come into and go out of the account. Some organisations which are very successful with funding even set up a separate account for each different funding amount received.

In preparing an acquittal report I would also focus heavily on what was achieved with the funding – ie. what did you purchase/spend the funding on – how did this assist the organisation and your clients/members, how did the project benefit the wider community and how did the project realize the objectives of the funding program, While the acquitting of funding is the final piece in this funding process, I always believe that you can still promote your organisation for future funding in the acquittal process by relaying the great outcomes achieved as a result of the funding. To me this is an important but mostly forgotten technique in accessing further funding.

## Need for Strong Business Cases

A story in the July edition of the Third Sector has caught our eye. In one of the articles the General Manager of Philanthropy at Perpetual, Andrew Thomas strongly states that organisations successful in receiving philanthropic funds all can demonstrate they have a strong business case based on outcomes which supports their project and submission. Perpetual distributes more than \$40 million each year across the not for profit sector on behalf of a variety the charitable trusts.

Some 1,100 NFPs applied for funding this year from Perpetual with only 166 organisations being successful. The ratio of success against rejection really reinforces how competitive sourcing funding. It clearly shows that organisations need to be very thorough in developing outstanding projects supported by comprehensive Business Cases in order to win funding. This is something we have been advocating for years through this business and our newsletters. To us winning funding is generally not about having the great words in writing a submission – winning funding is really about developing the best project – finding the most appropriate funding opportunity – ie. matching your organisation and project to the most ideal funding source/program and preparing a robust project plan/business case to support the project.

Preparation and planning to us are far more important than the actual writing of the submission. In our mind (which is clearly supported by the General Manager of one of Australia's largest Philanthropic Funding body) if you have implemented a strategic approach to the project as we have outlined above – the actual crafting of the submission should essentially be very easy and fall out from the comprehensive work already done in the project development phase including writing the project plan/business case.

It is critical that EVERY funding application is well thought out and that each one is tailored individually and demonstrates a clear link between the money being requested and the outcomes to the wider community. In our view many organisations applying for funding write with great passion and enthusiasm but they fail badly in clearly articulating that the project is well conceived, will realize wonderful and far reaching outcomes for the community, is efficient and effective and that risks can be mitigated.

Generally Philanthropists are very successful businessmen and businesswomen and to capture their hearts and more importantly their minds to support project concepts non-profits really need to demonstrate a professionalism and business acumen almost with their projects. As such the projects need to demonstrate they are unique, provide great value for money, show they are deliverable and give real confidence that the outcomes will be achieved.

We hear about so many great project concepts in our business but sadly most are just that – concepts or ideas. They have not been planned, have not been well researched and certainly are not supported by a well developed project plan/business case. Engaging specialists like us can give organisations and businesses a clear advantage over your competitors. We are very strategic in our approach and we therefore maximize the chances of success for our clients. This article in the Third Sector really reinforced that our approach to grant writing is spot on. I am not sure based on all our successes that we needed validation but it is still nice to hear key people in the industry reinforcing the key issues we have been trying to highlight for years.

## Some Tips for Grant/Tender Writing

People give to people! What sets winning proposals apart is relationship-building!

- Do your homework before making your initial contact with the contact for the tender/funding. It is important to make contact if possible as this is a chance to SUBTLY sell your project.
- Be proactive – not reactive.
- Write to your audience. Follow grant/tender guidelines exactly.
- Make certain that all proposal elements are connected and proof provided.
- Be authentic – demonstrate your passion.
- Have a second set of eyes review your work before submitting it.
- After being successful keep them informed, and
- Keep it simple yet comprehensive and interesting.

## Testimonials

At RTB, we don't advertise, that's really saying something for a company that has been in business over 10 years. What we do rely on though is the great feedback we have from our clients. Any company is only as good as its clients will tell you.

Here's what some have had to say in the last few months.

*"My application came No.1 out of 76 applications.*

*I have also been interviewed and just found out on Friday I was successful in the process.*

*I'd like to greatly thank you for your assistance in helping me craft a top application.*

*The guidance and direction you provided was very much appreciated."*

K Clark

"Amy's work was excellent - very quick to reply to emails and she wrote well - very positive research and she knew the school context - thank you."

Sue Wallace  
Principal  
Everton Park State High School

"Our company would like to express our deepest thanks and appreciation to the staff at Red Tape Busters. They have been writing our tender applications for the past 3 months and I am delighted to say that we have won two tenders that Red Tape Busters completed for us. We are very pleased with the personal attention they have given us and we consider them to be part of our team. We can honestly say that their personal attention to detail, ability to listen and translate our business has been fulfilling. Once again, we express our gratitude. We will be continuing to use Red Tape Busters for each tender we need to submit."

Geoff and Karen Firkin  
GF Property Maintenance

## Your stories

Is there an article you would like to see included in next month's newsletter?

We receive many requests to cover specific topics in our newsletters - you can leave your request at [www.redtapebusters.com/contactus.aspx](http://www.redtapebusters.com/contactus.aspx)

**Advice in this newsletter is general in nature, individuals and organisations should obtain specific advice dependent on their circumstances before making any decisions.**

*Contact us now and let us assist in developing project concepts that are likely to be funded, Allow us to find the funding opportunities and have us prepare great submissions to access funding. The time has come to professionalise your approach to funding. We certainly can help. We look forward to your contact and working with you soon.*