

## **'Making a difference' in your Community**

By Darren Gallagher

Is Australia's 'caring, sharing' spirit becoming lost?

For many years, notably from the period post World War Two, Australians were known to the world for our 'help thy neighbour', 'give you the shirt of our back' attitude.

However, in the latter stages of the 20th century, it seemed that modern technology could well have been responsible for bringing about the demise of community as we have known it. That real 'I'm alright Jack' attitude was permeating throughout society and was fuelled by that consuming desire by so many people for wealth and success.

Support for once popular community organisations like Rotary International, Lions International, APEX, Defence Force Cadets, Scouts, Guides and the like has dwindled as people opt out as a result of demanding business pressure, commuting to and from distant homes, and of course working partners.

In every major city, suburb and town around Australia there are organisations like these refusing to accept such a drift in attitude and lifestyle. But keeping pace with modern demands is costly and so many are fighting an uphill battle.

There are simply so many ways for someone to contribute to the re-building of social fibres that are so rapidly rotting around us. With money and time being our two biggest constraints, then each individual will have to examine their own ways in which they can contribute.

Did you ever notice how it's always the same guy or gal that runs the work 'coffee club'? Like with anything these days, there are workers, watchers and whingers – fitting for the 'www' life in which we are all living in. While I'm no techno-phobe, technology has to bear responsibility for taking people out of community environments. If you didn't have TV, even if you didn't leave the house, you would more likely be doing something constructive, that would eventually lead you to interact with others anyway.

### **Who wants you?**

While this list is not exhaustive, here are a few quick links to some local community, non-profit organisations that may be of interest.

Rotary International - [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)

Lions International - [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org)

APEX - [www.apex.org.au](http://www.apex.org.au)

Girl Guides Australia -  
[www.girlguides.org.au](http://www.girlguides.org.au)

Scouts Australia - [www.scouts.com.au](http://www.scouts.com.au)

State Emergency Service -  
[www.acses.org.au](http://www.acses.org.au)

Australian Defence Force Cadets -  
[www.cadetnet.gov.au](http://www.cadetnet.gov.au)

When you go on your next posting, check out what community activities are near you. It could be a service club, a youth group or even an emergency service group like the SES or Rural Fire-fighting. It may be taking up a dance style, or re-kindling an instrument that you used to play once upon a time. My point being, that each and every time you step outside of your family unit and engage people in your community by fostering good fellowship, you are patching up the damage in the community that is slipping through our fingers.