



Regional Development Australia

PEEL WA

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COMMUNITY-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

Regional Development Australia is a national network to grow and strengthen Australia's regions. It is a new beginning for regional advocacy and community development.

“Courtesy of www.ourcommunity.com.au”

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Creating a successful community-business partnership brings benefits to both the business and the community organisation involved, as well as the wider community.

The Essential Facts

A community-business partnership might involve any or all of the following types of collaboration:

- **Volunteering**, involving individual employees or groups, skilled or unskilled labour
- **Financial donations**, as a one-off, or through an ongoing employee donation scheme, regular staff collections, or sponsorship of a particular program or activity
- **In-kind donations**, involving donation of goods or services
- **Pro-bono or discounted services and products**, involving donated or cut-price contribution of skills, knowledge or experience
- **Secondment of business staff to the community group**, or the other way around, temporarily or on an ongoing basis
- **Mentoring of a staff member**, volunteer or even board/committee members to provide ongoing advice, support and professional development opportunities
- **Employment and work experience**, offering the opportunity to develop skills and provide pathways into the workplace
- **Scholarships and awards**, providing opportunities for study, research and reward
- **Sponsorship**, often through a "branding" opportunity
- **Sharing/donation of premises/infrastructure**, including office space, meeting space, or storage space
- **Business as a collection point**: where a business acts on behalf of the community group to take donations of money and/or goods.

The best partnerships start small and work their way up to becoming deeper, more multi-faceted, long-term relationships.

Importantly, they involve the business and the community organisation **working together** to create benefits for **both parties**.

If a partnership is to be truly successful and sustainable, both parties must take part in open and honest communication and both must share the responsibilities and the rewards.

Partnership Ideas Bank

Here are some ideas of community business partnerships that already exist.

The best and most enduring community-business partnerships are those where each partner contributes a range of inputs, resulting in a multi-faceted partnership. The



major forms of contribution can include a mixture of the following types of collaboration:

1. Placing a collection tin on the shop counter or business reception area to collect coins from passing trade for a favoured community organisation. The business could also offer the sale of merchandise for a community group.
2. Having your staff join together for a "team" or "whole-of-business" volunteering day or afternoon. It might be a team project to clean up an organisation's office, pack Christmas hampers, help build a playground, act as marshals at a special event or supply lunch at a local elderly citizens' club.
3. Holding a staff gold coin morning tea, with the money raised going to buy equipment for a staff-selected community organisation for a specific project.
4. Providing sponsorship for a team, a community organisation or a specific project.
5. Sponsoring a community event, from a town fair to a parade, to the annual Christmas Carols.
6. Offering to provide a percentage of the sale of goods or services from your business to a community group you support. It could be a butcher offering 5% of total sales to a school or group nominated by customers, or a car yard offering \$100 for every sale coming from a recommendation from a group, or a cake shop offering 50c for every half-dozen cakes sold during a sale.
7. Offering up your Boardroom for a local community organisation to use for their meetings, sparing them the cost of hiring a facility.
8. Agreeing to photocopy a regular newsletter or flyer for a community organisation, saving them the money of having to print it themselves.
9. Sending out mail for a community organisation through your business account, ensuring that you save them money. (Sending out 1000 letters could save them over \$500).
10. Having your staff members - particularly those with some expertise in financial or legal matters, volunteer to sit on Boards of local community organisations.
11. Offering your in-kind services to a community organisation. This could involve an electrician offering to do pro bono work at the local kinder, an accountant offering to complete the BAS statement for a group, a public relations firm offering so many hours a week, or a hairdresser visiting a residential unit or seniors' hostel to do an hour of free haircuts a month.
12. Offering some of your company's products as an in-kind gift. It could be a cinema offering 100 tickets a year to use in raffles or competitions for community groups, a butcher offering sausages, a baker offering rolls, a nursery offering plants or a restaurant offering excess food.
13. Offering some of your company's excess capacity. This could involve a trucking company offering to transport equipment for a community group on return trips when the trucks would otherwise be empty, restaurants offering the end of their shifts to help prepare food for a group.
14. Using your office/business as a collection point for cans of food or toys for a community organisation.
15. Offering to be a mentor for people in a group so that you are able to offer your expertise in a way that is approachable. This is about helping someone to acquire skills rather than you just doing the work and could include talking finances, media, marketing, computer technology or 1000 other things.

16. Thinking before throwing out unwanted equipment. What happens to the old fax, printer, photocopier or even the phone system when you change over? Many businesses throw them out but they can provide an affordable option for other groups.
17. Working with a community group to establish a scholarship or award that promotes positive behaviour. One example of this involves working with a local youth group to establish a Young Leaders Award.
18. Working with a local school or community group to sponsor children so that those who are disadvantaged can still take part in sporting activities, camps and school excursions.
19. Providing a major in-kind gift as a regular raffle prize or fundraiser.
20. If you have overstocked or are experiencing a time of excess stock or product, partner with a community group who is able to sell or use the excess.
21. Buying a block of memberships on behalf of your staff to support a community group and then becoming involved with the group.
22. Using your own marketing or media opportunities (website, newspaper, radio or TV ads, newsletters, emails) to promote a community group activity.
23. Using the technology and skills your company possesses to build a website for a community group.
24. Providing a spotter's fee or donation to a community group for every person who comes into your shop, asks for a quote or orders a service or good during a set period.
25. Working with the local garden club to donate not only goods (plants, fertiliser, garden stakes) but expertise to a community garden or reserve.
26. Arranging a staff secondment program - for example an accountancy firm can second one of its staff to help out a series of community groups during tax time - to expand the skills and experiences on both sides.
27. Offering storage space to a community group for its equipment or goods, allowing it to avoid the costs of paying for storage.
28. Co-sponsoring a scholarship with a community group that reflects common aims or goals - for example, your business and an environment group could sponsor a science scholarship for the student who comes up with the best water-saving method for their school.
29. Undertaking to add your influence and contacts to lobby for a change that would advantage a community organisation and provide widespread benefits to the community.
30. Providing discount services to ensure that community organisations can hold events that assist the community. An example is a power company providing free power to ensure a sustainable living fair goes ahead.



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